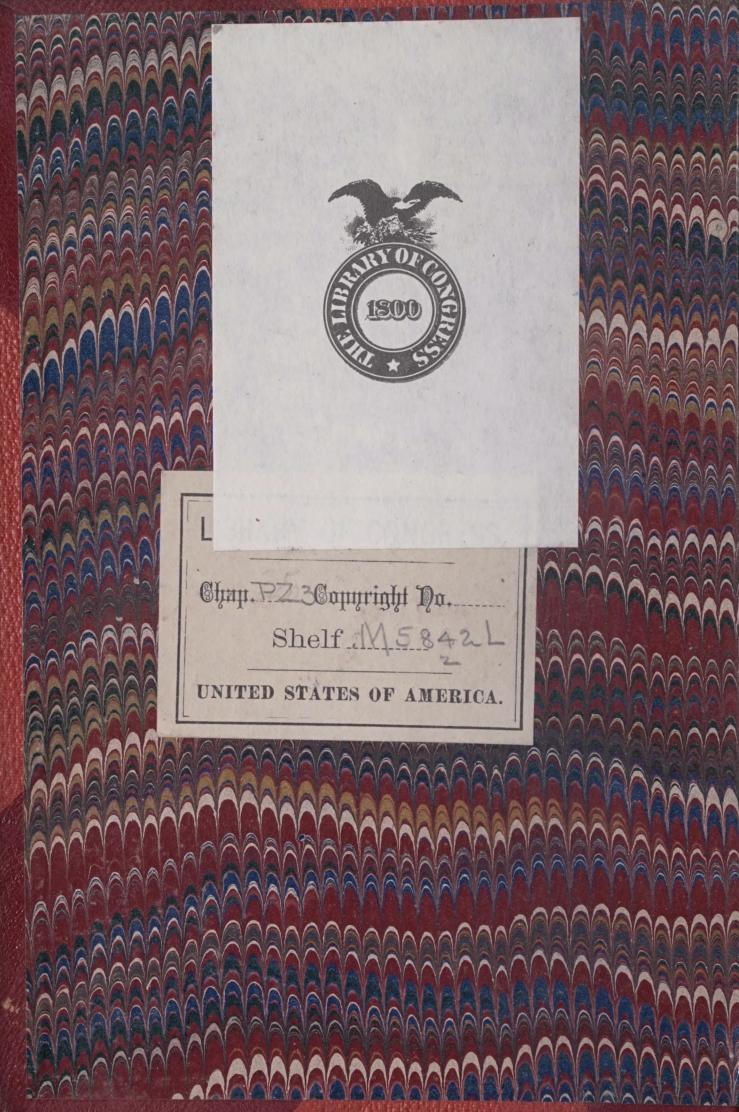
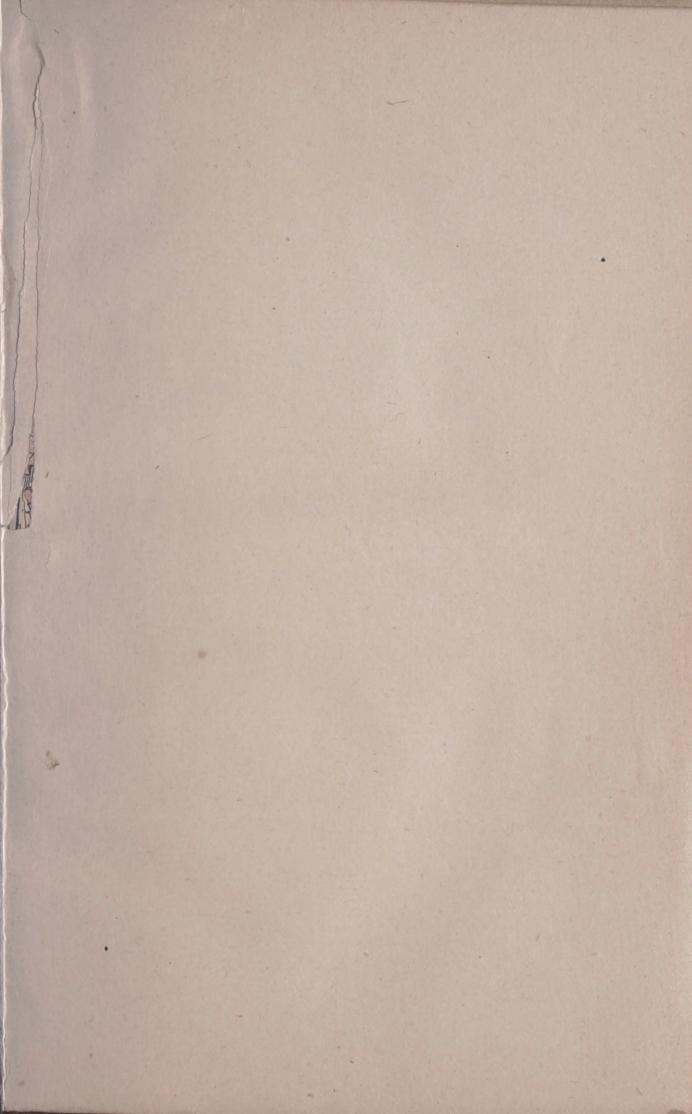
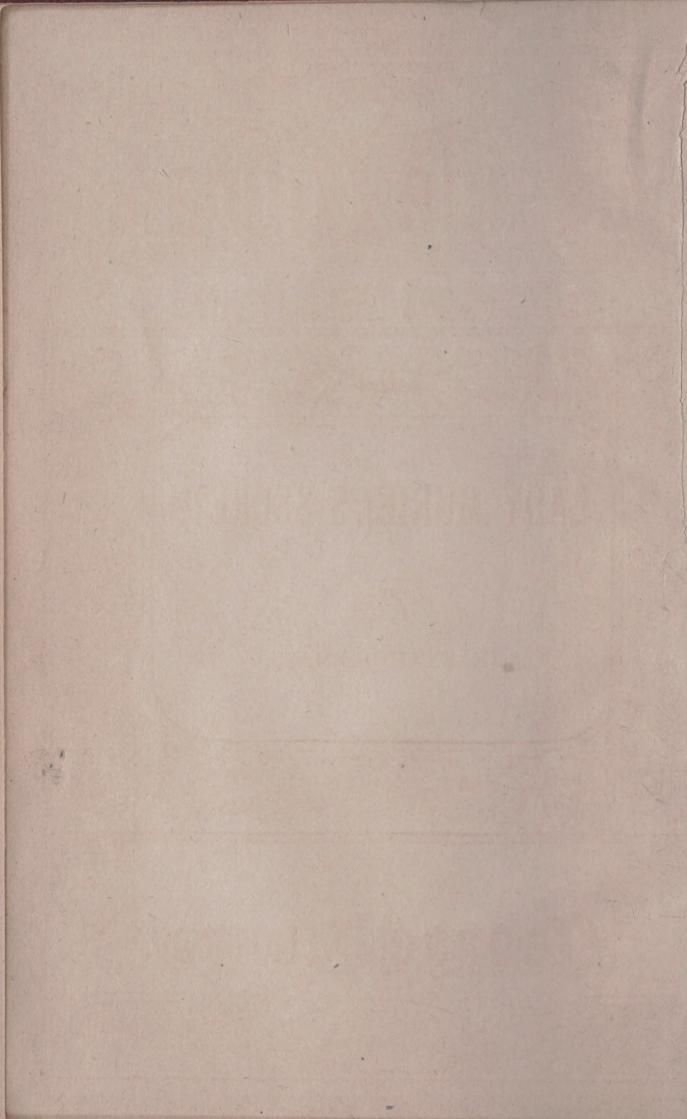
PZ 3 FT MEADE GenColl .M5842 L2 COPY 1











55. DOUBLE NUMBER.

PRICE

JESIES CONTRACTOR

Pocket Edition.

LADY MURIEL'S SECRET.

BY

JEAN MIDDLEMASS.

TO 27 VANDEWATER ST "NEW YORK" UBLISHE

The Seaside Library. Pocket Edition. Issued Tri-weekly. By Subscription \$36 per annum, righted 1883, by George Munro.—Entered at the Post Office at New York at second class rates.—Feb. 13, 1884

The Seaside Library

POCKET EDITION.

	7	
NO. PRICE.	NO. 58 Py the Cote of the See D C Muri	
1 Yolande. By William Black 20 2 Molly Bawn. By "The Duchess" 20	58 By the Gate of the Sea. D. C. Muri 59 Vice Versâ. By F. Anstey	
3 The Mill on the Floss. By George Eliot 20	60 The Last of the Mohicans. Cooper	
4 Under Two Flags. By "Ouida" 20	61 Charlotte Temple. By Mrs. Rowso	
5 Admiral's Ward. By Mrs. Alexander 20	62 The Executor. By Mrs. Alexander	
6 Portia. By "The Duchess" 20	63 The Spy. By J. Fenimore Cooper	
7 File No. 113. By Emile Gaboriau 20	64 A Maiden Fair. By Charles Gibbon	
8 East Lynne. By Mrs. Henry Wood 20	65 Back to the Old Home. By M. C. H	
9 Wanda. By "Ouida"	66 The Romance of a Poor Young Ma	
10 The Old Curiosity Shop. By Dickens. 20	By Octave Feuillet	
11 John Halifax, Gentleman. Miss Mulock 20	67 Lorna Doone. By R. D. Blackmore	123
12 Other People's Money. By Gaboriau. 20	68 A Queen Amongst Women. By the	753
13 Eyre's Acquittal. By Helen B. Mathers 10	Author of "Dora Thorne"	200
14 Airy Fairy Lilian. By "The Duchess" 20	69 Madolin's Lover. By the Author	1
15 Jane Eyre. By Charlotte Bronté 20	"Dora Thorne"	1837
16 Phyllis. By "The Duchess" 20	70 White Wings. By William Black.	000
17 The Wooing O't. By Mrs. Alexander 20	71 A Struggle for Fame. Mrs. Riddel	
18 Shandon Bells. By William Black 20	72 Old Myddelton's Money. By M. C. H	1
19 Her Mother's Sin. By the Author of	73 Redeemed by Love. By the Author	
"Dora Thorne" 20	"Dora Thorne"	
20 Within an Inch of His Life. By Emile	74 Aurora Floyd. By Miss M. E. Bradd	A S
Gaboriau 20	75 Twenty Years After. By Dumas.	33
21 Sunrise. By William Black 20	76 Wife in Name Only. By the Author	33
22 David Copperfield. Dickens. Vol. I 20	"Dora Thorne"	F
22 David Copperfield. Dickens. Vol. II. 20	77 A Tale of Two Cities. By Dickens	
23 A Princess of Thule. By William Black 20	78 Madcap Violet. By William Black.	
24 Pickwick Papers. Dickens. Vol. I 20	79 Wedded and Parted. By the Author	100
24 Pickwick Papers. Dickens. Vol. II 20	of "Dora Thorne"	100
25 Mrs. Geoffrey. By "The Duchess" 20	80 June. By Mrs. Forrester	四天
26 Monsieur Lecoq. By Gaboriau. Vol. I. 20	81 A Daughter of Heth. By Wm. Black	
26 Monsieur Lecoq. By Gaboriau. Vol. II. 20	82 Sealed Lips. By F. Du Boisgobey	
27 Vanity Fair. By William M. Thackeray 20	83 A Strange Story. Bulwer Lytton	
28 Ivanhoe. By Sir Walter Scott 20	84 Hard Times. By Charles Dickens.	. 2
29 Beauty's Daughters. "The Duchess" 20 30 Faith and Unfaith. By "The Duchess" 20	85 A Sea Queen. By W. Clark Russell.	
30 Faith and Unfaith. By "The Duchess" 20 31 Middlemarch. By George Eliot 20	86 Belinda. By Rhoda Broughton	
32 The Land Leaguers. Anthony Trollope 20	87 Dick Sand; or, A Captain at Fifteer	1. 0
33 The Clique of Gold. By Emile Gaboriau 20	By Jules Verne	+ 0
34 Daniel Deronda. By George Eliot 30	89 The Red Eric. By R. M. Ballantyne	
35 Lady Audley's Secret. Miss Braddon 20	90 Ernest Maltravers. Bulwer Lytton.	. 5
36 Adam Bede. By George Eliot 20	91 Barnaby Rudge. By Charles Dickens	3
37 Nicholas Nickleby. By Charles Dickens 30	92 Lord Lynne's Choice. By the Autho	r
38 The Widow Lerouge. By Gaboriau. 20	of "Dora Thorne"	2
39 In Silk Attire. By William Black 20	93 Anthony Trollope's Autobiography.	2
40 The Last Days of Pompeii. By Sir E.	94 Little Dorrit. By Charles Dickens	. 30
Bulwer Lytton 20	95 The Fire Brigade. R. M. Ballantyn	
41 Oliver I wist. by Charles Dickens 20	96 Erling the Bold. By R. M. Ballantyne	e 1
42 Romola. By George Eliot 20	97 All in a Garden Fair. Walter Besant.	. 20
43 The Mystery of Orcival. Gaboriau 20	98 A Woman-Hater. By Charles Reade	. 20
44 Macleod of Dare. By William Black 20	99 Barbara's History. A. B. Edwards	
45 A Little Pilgrim. By Mrs. Oliphant 10	100 20,000 Leagues Under the Seas. By	Y
46 Very Hard Cash. By Charles Reade. 20	Jules Verne	. 20
47 Altiora Peto. By Laurence Oliphant 20 48 Thicker Than Water. By James Payn. 20	101 Second Thoughts. Rhoda Broughton	a 20
49 That Beautiful Wretch. By Black 20	102 The Moonstone. By Wilkie Collins	. 30
50 The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton.	103 Rose Fleming. By Dora Russell	. 10
By William Black 20	104 The Coral Pin. By F. Du Boisgobey 105 A Noble Wife. By John Saunders	. 00
51 Dora Thorne. By the Author of "Her	106 Rholz House Dy Charles Dielsons	. 20
Mother's Sin "	106 Bleak House. By Charles Dickens 107 Dombey and Son. Charles Dickens.	40
52 The New Magdalen. By Wilkie Collins. 20	108 The Cricket on the Hearth, and Doctor	. 41
53 The Story of Ida. By Francesca. 10	Marigold. By Charles Dickens	11
54 A Broken Wedding-Ring. By the Au-	109 Little Loo. By W. Clark Russell	90
thor of "Dora Thorne". 90	110 Under the Red Flag. By Miss Braddon	1 70
55 The Three Guardsmen. By Dumas 20	111 The Little School-Master Mark. By	7
56 Phantom Fortune. Miss Braddon 20	J. H. Shorthouse	16
57 Shirley. By Charlotte Bronté 20	112 The Waters of Marah. By John Hil	1 20
(This List is Continued of	n Third Page of Cover	1506
(This List is Continued on Third Page of Cover.)		

LADY MURIEL'S SECRET.

By JEAN MIDDLEMASS.



NEW YORK:
GEORGE MUNRO, PUBLISHER,
17 TO 27 VANDEWATER STREET.

mor By t hor ck . ldel . H ide is.

LADY MURIEL'S SECRET.

CHAPTER 1.

PATTY.

"LADY MURIEL's carriage! I wonder what she be do-

ing in Arundale on a Sabbath afternoon?"

"The carriage! Where, Granny? I like to see that grand carriage with its big horses coming down the hill. It bowls along so swift. It seems to give me a whiff out of another life."

"Another life, girl! Aren't you content with this one?" and an old woman who was seated in an arm-chair by the window turned her keen eyes on her granddaughter's face, as she stood gazing over some low cottages opposite the one in which they were living. The girl was looking hard at Lady Muriel Alston's carriage, as it sped down the hill from Dale House.

"Content?" she answered, half dreamily, more bent on watching the carriage than on her grandmother's words. "Ay, of course I am content, but at nineteen one don't sit with folded hands. I suppose I shall live my life."

sit with folded hands. I suppose I shall live my life."

"Live your life? Just stick to your work in the factory, my lass, and hope that one day some honest lad will make you his wife; and leave 'living a life' to wenches who haven't had your eddication and bringing up."

"Marry a factory worker! No, Granny, that I never will. My mother, you've often told me, married a; but I shall miss seeing the carriage properly if I don't run

outside."

"Follow your mother, girl, and you'll come to destruction. Poor lass! if you've got they grand ideas you'd best die at once. Bless my heart, what have I striven and

toiled for, to make you a decent, hardworking girl, if you're going to flaunt after every gentleman in the country. Not marry a factory worker indeed!"

And old Mrs. Urske grew quite excited as she chatted

on.

It was all lost on her granddaughter, however, who was standing by the door waiting for the Dale House carriage

to pass.

Patty was right; she was only nineteen, and she had her life before her. No one, save purblind old Granny could doubt it, as they looked into her bright sunny face, with its large blue eyes, full lips, fair complexion, and masses of curling auburn hair, which would not be repressed or straightened, notwithstanding the washing and damping which, by Granny's orders, it daily received.

As Patty Urske—she was always called Patty Urske, because her grandmother's name was Urske, and no one in Arundale knew Patty's real name—as she stood by the door that lovely July afternoon, in a tidy blue gingham frock, put on quite clean because it was Sunday, the most blasé of beauty-seekers must have been awakened at the

sight of her.

The prettiest girl in all the Dale, ay, that she was, though she herself was only just beginning to find it out, the fact having been thrust on her, in the first instance, by the malice and uncharitableness of the girls with whom she came in contact.

The Urskes had only been in Arundale about two years; they had come from London, they said, but no one knew anything of their antecedents, neither the old woman nor

Patty being free of speech.

In education, appearance, and general neatness they were considerably above the rest of the Dale population, which was another reason for the evident prejudice there was against them.

"Why such moighty folks as they should humble theirselves to factory work?" was a question very frequently

asked by one neighbor of another.

For Patty Urske had been now for more than eighteen months past a gold burnisher in Messrs. Schippheim's large porcelain manufactory. The employment pleased her less than she chose to acknowledge to her grandmother, not so much on account of the actual work she had to do, as be-

cause the association with coarse, low natures jarred some-

what on her more refined temperament.

Patty, though her ruling passion was ambition, was, however, too good a girl to complain uselessly. She knew that old Mrs. Urske could not keep the pot boiling without her assistance, and she contributed to it gladly, only resolving to bide her time for finding a more congenial

mode in which to make money.

How that more congenial mode was ever likely to be discovered in Arundale neither she nor any one who knew the place could have divined. It was not a large place, numbering in all about three thousand souls, and out of the three thousand every available man, woman, and child was employed in the factory. There were only just enough shops in the town to serve the necessities of life; two doctors, a pastor, who, unaccustomed to such sort of folk, made but little way with his flock; a Board school, and a Nonconformist minister, who carried off the larger portion of the Established clergyman's congregation. All the rest was factory or belonging to the factory; even the hospital, which was the gem of Arundale, had been built and endowed by the firm, and was worked by a staff of nurses under the immediate supervision of the elder partner.

How comes it, then, that so well appointed an equipage, bearing such an unmistakably aristocratic brand as Ladv Muriel Alston's, should be seen dashing through Arundale

in that hot July afternoon?

The Alstons are factory too.

Though the firm goes by the name of Schippheim and Company, Mr. Herbert Alston is one of the partners, and so rich a man that he did not find it difficult some three years ago to obtain the hand of Lady Muriel Maxwell, youngest daughter of Lord Auchinlie, an impoverished Scotch earl.

It was a great day for Arundale when the junior partner married an earl's daughter, each one of the "hands" taking it home to himself as an especial honor; and never did Lady Muriel appear among them but she was treated with as much deference and homage as if she were the Queen

Patty Urske had caught a good deal of the Lady Muriel infection, in so far that she was always glad to look at her; but, unlike her neighbors, it was more with a view to

imitation than worship.

What would she not have given to be a great lady like Lady Muriel, and wear nice clothes and pretty laces, and have a grand carriage to drive about in?

Ay, and she would have it too, some day.

It never occurred to Patty, as it did to others in Arundale, that the distance between them and Lady Muriel

was so great as to be well-nigh impassable.

Dale House, where Lady Muriel lived, was about two miles out of Arundale, at the top of a high hill, and for a long while the carriage could be seen as it wound its way round and round down the hill. All the while as she watched it Patty was thinking of her own destiny in life. Two men from the other side of the road gave her a goodday as she stood there; they were two of the most respectable of the factory hands, but she only nodded her head to them very carelessly.

"Joe Marks and Dick Swift," she muttered to herself; "they're what granny would call God-fearing lads. Joe keeps his old mother, and Dick puts his money in the savings bank. She'd have me marry the like o' them, but if I am to spend my life with factory boys, the sooner

the Lord takes it the better."

This somewhat irreverent monologue was, however, brought to an abrupt conclusion by the carriage turning the corner of the street and coming all at once into full view. Hats were off everywhere among the many loiterers about Arundale on this holiday afternoon, and many a courtesy was dropped. But Lady Muriel did not note them; perhaps she was too much accustomed to homage, or perhaps she was too much taken up by the young beauty at the cottage door, for, very certainly, her eyes once cast on Patty, she did not remove them till she was well out of sight.

"That girl is much too pretty to be an Arundale worker," she observed, as soon as they were well past

Patty, to a lady who was sitting beside her.

"Who? which? where?" asked a young man, lounging

on the back seat of a barouche.

"Oh, you are too late! We have passed her ages ago," and Lady Muriel laughed, and probably thought no more of the subject.

Not so Patty; she had seen each inmate of that carriage very clearly; and their general appearance, the very color of their clothes, would be graven on her recollection for days. The young lady, Miss Yorke, who sat beside Lady Muriel, and was her cousin, Patty knew very well by sight; but the man was a stranger to her. He was a goodlooking man, about eight-and-twenty, with blue eyes, and a long, fair-beard-probably an admirer of Miss Yorke, Patty thought. But young fair men were not beings who formed any part in Patty's crude carving of her life, so she bestowed no second thought upon him, but stood speculating about the ladies, exercising her mind very much about the fashion of their clothes and the whiteness of their skin. She would have been rather surprised if any one had told her that Lady Muriel's complexion was almost an unhappiness to her; that she used cream of roses every morning, wore thick veils whenever the wind was in the east, and would have given a whole year's income to have possessed the soft delicate coloring of the girl who was leaning against the doorpost watching the carriage.

For such a long time did Patty stand there dreaming that the old woman by the window grew impatient. Yet Patty was not a dreamer in the usual way; she was far too ambitious to be otherwise than practical. She shook herself when she heard her grandmother's voice as though to dispel the visions that flitted around her, and went into the room, which served them for both sitting and

bedroom.

"Five o'clock struck by the factory clock, and me dying for a cup of tea, which I don't seem likely to get," grumbled

the old woman, in the querulous tone of age.

"All right, Granny; you shall have it in a jiffey," cried the girl, cheerily, "I did not know it was so late. The kettle is on the fire, and a few sticks will set it boiling while I get the things."

"Sticks! that's just what you do, Patty; waste the sticks. Why can't you look to the kettle and see that it boils without wasting wood? You'll come to the work'us,

girl."

Patty was too wise to answer; she gave a little jerk as though this sort of petty economy irritated her, but she took of the wood store sparingly.

In a few minutes the tea was quite ready and Patty wheeled her Granny's chair to the table, for, worn out by years and work, the old woman was too crippled to walk. Most likely it was her utter helplessness and dependence on her neighbors for assistance, when Patty was not by to give it to her, that made her irritable and exacting; at least so Patty was logical enough to think while she strove with all her might not to give cross answers, or to be put

out by Granny's tiresome ways.

Try how she could, however, it was sometimes very difficult to keep her temper, and the constant unnecessary fault-finding to which she was subjected was scarcely calculated to improve the girl's disposition, only, as it happened, Patty's will was a strong one, and she was determined to remember that Granny had been very good to her, working hard to bring her up respectably and give her a fair modicum of education, and that she must in her turn put up with her now that she was old and unable to fend for herself. It was, perhaps, more duty than love that impelled Patty to this practice, for love is apt to be speedily dried up when very constant drains are made at its fount.

"There, Granny, and the toast is lovely—real pork dripping; see, I've cut off all the crust, and I'll eat it myself. You will enjoy your tea this blessed Sabbath, I do believe."

Patty's fresh young voice was like a breeze of ozone even without her cheery words, and if the old woman would only have deigned to throw off her mask, she would have acknowledged it, for she loved the girl dearly, notwithstanding her constant grumbling. She ate up her toast greedily, and drank the sweet tea, in which she only indulged on Sundays, without apparently noticing that Patty's crusts were dry, for she had reserved the only remaining piece of dripping for Granny's next piece. She was just preparing it with much care when a knock came at the door, and two neighbors asked admittance for a Sunday chat.

Old Mrs. Urske never told anything about her own affairs, but she was always glad to listen to those of other people, and Patty, as a rule, welcomed strangers because they generally put the old lady in a good humor. But she was not quite so pleased to see these people as she

might have been, since they were Joe Marks and his

mother, who was an especial crony of Mrs. Urske.

Patty had a suspicion that Joe Marks was making up to her, and that Granny encouraged it, and as her ambition led her far beyond the humble position of Mr. Joe Marks, she never saw him come across their threshold without regretting that she happened to be at home, since she was compelled to be civil to him in her own house. In the factory, when they came in contact, she was very off-hand, always refusing Joe's little attentions if he wanted to see her home, carry her implements, or render her any small assistance. But she did not meet him often, as the men and women worked in different rooms, and even entered the building by different doors.

"Thought we'd look in and see how you be doing this bright evening, Mrs. Urske," said Mrs. Marks, as she sat down, and Patty poured out some tea. "Heat's a-bit

trying to you, I make no doubt."

When is not the weather trying to two croaking old Englishwomen? On this occasion, however, it did not long form the subject of conversation. The sight of the Dale House carriage in Arundale on a Sunday afternoon

had set the population on the qui vive.

"Never since Schippheim's factory was a factory has such a thing as their carriage in Arundale on the Sabbath ever been seen afore," said Mrs. Marks, with as much indignation in her tone as though she were a strict church-goer, which assuredly she was not, her Sabbatarianism being entirely confined to well-worn usages and old prejudices.

"Why Lady Muriel shouldn't drive of a Sunday I dunno," observed Patty. "What's the use of being a lady if

you can't do as you like?"

"And the coachman and the footman, and the horses to clean; haven't you any consideration for them? How would you like to do work up at the factory of a Sunday?"

"As well one day as another. I never said as I liked it any day," answered Patty, in a low tone. She evidently did not wish her granny to hear. This Joe observed, for he broke into a sentence which his mother began with "Dear heart! Did any one ever hear the like"—by asking Patty if she wished to be a lady. Patty did not speak, but the bright light in her eyes while she nodded

her head fully expressed her feelings, and made Joe

heave a sigh as he went and stood by the window.

Poor, hard-working, contented Joe! It was a pity, most people would have said, that Patty could not fancy him; they might even have added that it was strange she did not; for he was a well-looking lad of about twenty-two, with an intelligent, open countenance, the very type of an intelligent English artisan. He never frittered away his wages in public-houses and low pastimes; perhaps he was too humdrum and goody according to Patty's estimate of what a man should be. There is no knowing what virtue or vice it is in a man that pleases a woman.

CHAPTER II.

A FAMILY PARTY.

In order to answer the question of where the Dale House people were going on that Sunday afternoon—an incident which gave rise to so much discussion in Arun-

dale-we must go back to the previous afternoon.

Lady Muriel is sitting in her own particular boudoir, with all the rose colored blinds pulled down, partly to shelter the room from the rays of the sun, but chiefly to cast over it a becoming light. It is a very pretty room, full of articles of vertu and art treasures of much worth, all tastefully, even artistically, arranged. There are two or three pictures on the walls, of the decided Burne Jones type; yet Lady Muriel regards ætheticism as a vice. She delights in art in all its most recognized forms; in fact, the potentates in the factory almost wish Lady Muriel was not such an art dabbler, since she interferes with the designs of the work that has to be executed, in a manner which rather hinders than accelerates labor.

To such a degree has this interference extended, that about three weeks before the Sunday afternoon on which the carriage passed the Urskes' cottage, the chief draughtsman and director of the designs generally, had thrown up his appointment in a huff, to Lady Muriel's no small delight, but rather to the consternation of the partners, who, although they had a firm belief in Lady Muriel's

taste, were yet a little puzzled to know where to turn for

a man competent to fill so important a position.

Lady Muriel was, however, quite equal to the occasion. She knew where to find the very artist who would make the beauty of their designs the talk of Europe she said; perhaps, indeed, she had had this very man in her mind when she made Arundale too hot for the crushed individual whom she called "that cramped, old-fashioned, would-be artist, Mr. Richard Jones."

Lady Muriel's protégé was a Frenchman, Paul Brumeau by name. It was to meet Paul Brumeau that Lady Muriel had committed the somewhat heinous crime, in the eyes of the Arundale people, of having the carriage

out on Sunday.

As she sits in her boudoir on the previous day, a footman in a rather gorgeous blue and red livery brings in the midday letters by the second post. Lady Muriel gives a little cry of delight when she reads the top one bearing a French mark. While she is thus engaged we may as well sketch her as she reclines in the corner of her dark satin sofa.

She is a woman of about eight and twenty; tall and graceful in figure, but possessing no actual beauty. Her face cannot boast of one good feature, save a pair of flashing eyes, and the complexion is so colorless as to be called by her detractors, pasty. And of course Lady Muriel has detractors. What elegant, artistic-looking woman has not? And that she can lay claim to these adjectives there is little doubt. Her black flossy hair is always perfectly dressed, lying close to her head in thick plaits. dresses, exquisite in fit and style, are, for the most part, models from La Ferrière, or copies turned out with wonderful faithfulness by a French maid who came to Lady Muriel from one of the great French houses when she married Mr. Alston. In the hands of these two able artistes, Lady Muriel is never either over or under dressed. Silks and satins for home wear in the morning she would as soon think of donning as sackcloth for a ball. More than one connoisseur has believed in Lady Muriel's artistic proclivities from the simple fact that she so thoroughly understands the art of appropriate clothes.

As soon as she has finished reading the letter in which M. Brumeau announces his arrival in England for the fol-

lowing day, she rings the bell and desires the aforesaid man in blue to inform Mr. Alston, as soon as he comes in

from the works, that she wishes to speak to him.

Dale House is a large, white, Italian-looking villa, with green Venetians and a green veranda, about a mile-and-a-half up hill from the works. Mr. Alston seldom returns so early in the day, having a snug room in the factory, but Lady Muriel remembers that it is Saturday, and he will therefore be in to luncheon.

She is very much interested in this new epoch which she believes is about to begin for the factory, and is so excited that she does not even attempt to open the other letters. Hearing the sound of voices outside on the veranda, which is shady, she takes up a parasol to keep her from the sun, and goes in the direction of the voices.

An Indian rug has been thrown down, and on it a fair young man in a suit of very light clothes, and a hat to match them, with a puggeree tied round it, is lying at full length. He is supposed to be reading a newspaper, but is not bestowing on it a very large share of his attention. Near him, on a low chair, is seated Lady Muriel's pretty little first cousin Bertha Yorke. She is dressed all in white batiste, with a wide blue sash round her dainty waist; and the curls of her rippling brown hair are almost concealed under a very large flapping sun hat. She is not reading or pretending to read, for seated in her lap is Master Eric, Lady Muriel's two-years-old boy, who has a perfect passion for Bertha, and, a young rebel by nature, is never so good as when in her society.

"I thought I should find you here. Really, Bertha, you will tire yourself to death with that child. Where's his nurse?"

And there was an amount of petulance in Lady Muriel's tone as she spoke, and a frown on her white brow which showed that something beyond the very usual occurrence of Eric being on Bertha's knee had put her out.

It could scarcely be the announced arrival of M. Paul Brumeau. Was it not rather the sight of that little group so comfortably arranged on the Indian rug?

The young man lounging there jumped up as he heard Lady Muriel speak, for he had not noticed her footstep, and he went at once to get her a chair. "So delightful here, Lady Muriel; quite cool and de-

"Thank you, Christian, I do not intend to stay. I have too much to do to be lounging about at this hour. M. Paul Brumeau comes to-morrow."

"First rate!" cried the man she called Christian. "What a wonderfully clever woman you are, Lady Muriel."

And there was something very much like a flash passed simultaneously from his gray eyes and from her black ones, while he spoke—which Bertha, however, did not see; perhaps they did not intend that she should do so.

Lady Muriel went on talking practically.

"M. Paul Brumeau will arrive in England at a very early hour, and will travel straight on, arriving, as he thinks, at Arundale, about half-past four in the afternoon. You know there are no trains stopping at Arundale on Sunday, so he will find himself stranded eight miles off at Belton. I wonder if Mr. Alston would let us have the carriage to go and meet him. He objects, as a rule, to its going out on Sunday."

"Of course he will. Does he ever oppose your wishes when he really knows you want a thing?"

This was Bertha's observation.

"Well, no, I don't think he does. He is very good," and she gave a little sigh and closed her eyes as though dwelling unctuously on the merits of her husband.

Christian dispelled the dream, however, by jumping

up.

"Let us all go, I am quite longing to see this Paul Brumeau. I have heard so much about him."

"I am willing, but of course it entirely depends on Mr.

Alston. Here he comes."

Enters on this family group, Herbert Alston, junior partner of the house of Schippheim and Co. He is not fair to look on, but he is a young man, still in the thirties, that is to say. He has a coarse, full face, is short, rather round in figure, and take all his attributes collectively, he by no means gives you the idea of a thorough gentleman, though a moneyed man unquestionably he must be, or surely Lady Muriel would never have married him. He wears a cutaway tweed suit, and a low, stiff hat,

which he pushes to the back of his head as soon as he gets into the shade, and begins a sentence with-

"Cursed nuisance being without a designer; there's an

order come in from-"

Seeing Eric, however, in Bertha's lap, he does not finish, but snatching up the child, begins to kiss and play with him, while Lady Muriel says with dignity-

"Shop is not allowed in play hours, Herbert; yet we

should like to know from whom an order has come."

"From the Emperor of China, for a dinner service of which all the plates are to be English views."

"What nonsense!"

"On my honor, it is gospel truth; and now Jones is gone, I don't know how we shall accomplish it."

"Jones! pooh! Paul Brumeau will be here to-mor-

row."

"No! that is news," and Mr. Alston put the baby back in its cousin's lap, and directed all his attention to his wife's announcement, as he asked:

"You are sure, Muriel, that this Brumeau is really a great artist? You know we have quite trusted to you in this matter. As for Schippheim——"

"My dear Herbert, don't quote Mr. Schippheim. He is quite satisfied with my choice, and told me yesterday he was only too delighted to think we had secured the services of so great a man as M. Paul Brumeau."

"Well, I don't pretend to be a judge in matters of design, I leave them to you and Schippheim, contenting myself with the practical business details. So this man is

coming to-morrow you say?"

"Yes, and we want to drive over to Belton and meet him. As a foreigner and a great artist, it would only be kind, especially as there are no trains to Arundale on Sunday."

"The carriage on a Sunday! What will the people

think?"

"They must learn, my dear Herbert, that unusual occasions demand unusual treatment," and Lady Muriel's brow contracted just enough to show she intended to have her own way in this matter.

"Well, well, well, my love. Do as you like. I dare say Christian will go with you. I am sorry I cannot; but I have arranged to run over some accounts with Schippheim to-morrow afternoon."

"On a Sunday, Herbert! Oh, fie!" But Lady Muriel smiled as she chided him. She had gained her point, and

consequently was in her wonted good temper.

Lady Muriel was too well bred ever to suffer herself to be much ruffled, at least in outward appearance; but those who knew her well had no difficulty in reading the determination expressed in that pucker which every now and again showed itself on her white brow. Eric's nurse soon afterward came and took him away, and then the whole party went in to luncheon, during which repast Lady Muriel never ceased to converse about the great future that was in store for the porcelain manufactory of Schippheim and Co., under the artistic direction of M. Paul Brumeau.

Mr. Alston was evidently rather bored, for the important reason that he understood but little of what he called "art jargon." Common delf was to him as valuable as Sèvres, provided it brought in as good a money return.

"And there is a good deal—a very good deal of money to be made out of honest earthenware pots and pans," he had been heard to observe more than once, when pressed

very closely in matters of art.

Somewhat strange, it may be imagined, that this man should be a partner in so essentially artistic a firm as that of the great Arundale porcelain and pottery manufacture. But Mr. Schippheim had admitted this young man some ten years ago, for two reasons: first, because he believed in his business habits; and, secondly, because he brought a good deal of ready money into the concern, by which means Mr. Schippheim would be able to extend the business, and put into working order several slumbering artistic plans.

Mr. Alston was not, however, such a mere clerk with money as Mr. Schippheim expected; he did not always agree with the senior partner in his vagaries, as he was pleased to call his schemes, and the disputes between them on the subject of money were not unfrequently loud and violent. In these, of course, Lady Muriel took no part, nor, indeed, was she aware of how frequent were

these disputes.

But leaving the Dale House party to dawdle through the intervening hours before the time should arrive to bring M. Paul Brumeau back from the Belton station as their guest till some comfortable quarters should be arranged for him in the town, let us turn our attention to the great potentate of Arundale, the senior partner, as he sits on the following Monday morning in his office in a quadrangle at the back of the works.

CHAPTER III.

THE SENIOR PARTNER.

MAX SCHIPPHEIM, as his name denotes, was a German, but he had lived so long in England that he had lost all remnant of his nationality. He barely spoke with a foreign accent, and often laughingly said that he had nearly forgotten how to talk his own language.

At this period he was a man of about eight and forty, though he looked older, probably from having abjured for years past all youthful amusements and devoted himself con amore to the building up, arranging, and carrying

out of the great Arundale works.

Till he had taken Mr. Alston into partnership some ten years previously, the management of the whole concern had rested with himself alone, a stupendous undertaking, which only a very strong head could have contemplated, much less carried out with wonderful precision, entering minutely into the smallest details. But you had only to look at Mr. Schippheim to see that he was not wanting in brains. He had a large, well-formed head, a high, intellectual forehead, and dark intelligent eyes; otherwise, he was by no means a handsome or even a goodlooking man. Broad-shouldered and tall, yet he stooped as he walked along with a somewhat slovenly gait, possibly from his having contracted the habit of looking abstractedly at the ground while engaged in deep thought.

As for his clothes, if not exactly dirty, they were at least very slovenly and untidy. It was a point on which he and Lady Muriel had many a passage at arms, and to some extent she had succeeded in reforming his appearance. What she could not succeed in effecting was that he should cut his hair, which grew in untidy profusion all

about his shoulders and face. He rather liked Lady Muriel; the keen way in which she entered into everything connected with the artistic department at Arundale amused him, while he acknowledged that she occasionally threw new and therefore precious lights on matters concerning taste and design; but Max Schippheim had never habituated himself to think of women as being anything more than the playthings of life, and he could not be expected all at once to give Lady Muriel an important place in the Arundale works.

He was always obliged to her when she interested herself in matters of detail, as she had done on the occasion of the dismissal of the inefficient designer in chief; but though Ladv Muriel gave out that she had been solely instrumental in unearthing and bringing M. Paul Brumeau over even from the Sèvres manufactory itself, yet she knew quite well that Mr. Schippheim would not have engaged him on her word had he not learnt from one of his correspondents that Brumeau, though holding but a subordinate position at Sèvres, was yet a good artist and capa-

ble of doing even great work.

Lady Muriel was quite aware in her own heart of what a disparaging view Mr. Schippheim took of all women, herself included, and we might almost say she hated him for the knowledge, though she managed to conceal her hate so discreetly that with most people the feeling she entertained for him would most certainly be called very strong liking. If she did not like him, they would have asked, then why was she always looking him up, interesting herself about his clothes, his mode of life, the way he over-fatigued himself at the works, etc., etc.

They could not be expected to see all at once through the thick mist in which Lady Muriel enveloped her actions, and to discover that the ruling passion of her life

was a love of power.

To govern calmly, gracefully, softly from the corner of her satin-covered sofa, but still to govern, no matter who or what, whatever came in her way-her husband of course, though he did not guess it; and for this she deserves kudos for her cleverness and tact.

One individual, however, read her through and through as though she were a book, and that individual was Max Schippheim himself. He had been perusing faces and

contemplating characters all his life; it would have been

strange had he failed in studying Lady Muriel.

"She would take the whole of Arundale into her individual charge and lock me up in my own office as a cipher if I gave her her head," he would observe occasionally to himself; and then, chuckling, he would add: "And a jolly mess she would make of it. No, my little lady, you must have your vanity kept just gently tickled, and be retained as merely the pretty plaything which you ought to be."

And on this he acted, to the constant irritation of her ladyship, who never could discover, plausible though he invariably was in his manner to her, that she got any nearer to filling the post she so much desired at the right hand of the senior partner. He was always moving without her, showing her that he had a strong right hand of his own, and that though he accepted her pretty advances with much seeming satisfaction and appreciation, yet that he intended to use it.

It was the old story of woman's wit against man's strength, and, for the present at all events, every day that broke on Arundale showed that the man was getting by far the best of the struggle. Perhaps she had not set her full mental energies to work, or perhaps she was no match for him—time alone would prove which of they twain was

For the moment Lady Muriel was delighted that she had so far gained her point as to have brought Paul Brumeau to Arundale, for had she not thus secured for herself a powerful coadjutor?—at least she hoped so. Twenty times she had read the postscript of a letter she had received from a cousin in Paris about this new addition to

the Arundale life.

"He is a man of refinement, who has known better days, brimming over with talent; but, alas! for his worldly knowledge, he is rather a facile tool in the hands of a crafty woman, hence the reason he is so anxious to leave France at this moment."

She has not shown this postcript either to Mr. Schippheim or her husband; beyond, therefore, that he is a good artist and a clever designer, the senior partner knows nothing of the man he is about to receive as he sits running his eye over a pile of correspondence in his office that Monday

morning. After a while the foreman enters the room and tells him that M. Brumeau is in attendance.

"Ask him to come in, Andrews,"

Another second and the Frenchman stands inside the door, and makes a profound bow. As he raises his head the two men look at each other keenly for a second or so, as though seeking to read each other, and Mr. Schippheim begs his new employé to be seated.

Paul Brumeau is a little man of about three-and-thirty, so little and so odd-looking in dress and appearance that Mr. Schippheim is half afraid as he looks at him that he will be a sort of butt at the works, and not able to maintain any of the respect which it is so necessary that the

chief designer should inspire.

He has a bird-like face, with the tiniest of mustaches, and a long thin head—a striking contrast to Max Schippheim's large broad one; his fingers, too, are rather like claws, and he keeps his not over-clean nails very pointed, as though to accentuate the resemblance. His somewhat shrunken legs are cased in trousers of the largest patterned dark plaid, and he also wears a cutaway coat of the same material, and a red cravat round his neck. Need we say that his linen, as much as is perceptible of it, is not unimpeachable in hue. Taken altogether, his appearance is rather picturesque, though scarcely in accordance with

English taste.

"So this is my lady's protégé," thought Mr. Schippheim. "Well, she'll soon change the attire, and then for the rest we shall see," and a smile stole over his face for a moment as he thought of this odd-looking man driving through Arundale in Lady Muriel's carriage on the previous day, of which expedition he had heard, and did not altogether regret it, since he was quite aware that Lady Muriel's protection would go a long way toward ingratiating M. Brumeau in the favor of the Arundale people. The first few introductory sentences over, the conversation between the two men turned on matters of detail relating to the arrangement of the works and the organization of the workers, until after a while they went out together to inspect the premises generally.

Mr. Schippheim had argued truly; there was many a stifled giggle and repressed smile as they passed the various groups of workers, for which reason he treated M.

Paul Brumeau with more deference than he would otherwise have done. He was determined to support him thoroughly while he was in his establishment, though he equally made up his mind to get rid of him speedily, unless he turned out to be a very Apelles with his pencil.

One great drawback to M. Brumeau in Mr. Schippheim's opinion was his scant knowledge of English, while Schippheim himself, though of course with a German accent, spoke French fluently; but he was afraid that his curious phraseology when he gave orders and attempted to instruct would either be misunderstood or treated with derision and contempt.

Taken collectively the advantages and disadvantages that this man possessed, Mr. Schippheim was not exactly satisfied. Had he not, in spite of his determination to the contrary, been a little bit influenced by Lady Muriel's

wishes?

Not that such an idea occurred to him even for a minute as he made a tour of the manufactory. He had far too great a belief in his own strength to imagine it possisible that a woman could have any power to impel him either to the right or left. If he had ever had any tender feeling for any woman he must either have hidden it carefully away, or the fair one must dwell somewhere out of daily reach, for none of the Arundale people ever suspected that Mr. Schippheim knew what the word "love" meant.

The master and his new designer had passed through several of the lower rooms and were just entering the large painting room, where some half-dozen artists possessing more or less knowledge were employed in embellishing plates, cups, mugs, and various other vessels for domestic use.

Now Mr. Schippheim thought he would be able to guage this new director's abilities by his remarks, when he was stopped at the very entrance by the overlooker of the mechanical department, who, touching his hat to the chief, asked him for a hospital order.

This sudden demand was a little out of rule, accidents being admitted to the hospital without a moment's delay, and all cases of illness being scheduled and laid before Mr. Schippheim with his letters in the early morning.

"Something very urgent, I suppose, Andrews. What

is it? I thought you said all the hands answered to their names this morning?"

"Yes, sir. It is not a hand, but old Mrs. Urske, Patty

Urske's grandmother; she has had a fit."

"Patty Urske—Patty Urske. I don't recollect the name. Do I know her?"

"She's a good burnisher, sir. A tidy-looking girl with auburn hair; generally sits near the door in the long room. She—"

"Yes, yes; I recollect her now. Does she live with

this grandmother?"

"Yes, sir, they two alone; and while the girl's at work there's no one to mind the old woman. She had a fit this morning since Patty came up here. It was a wonder she was not burnt to death, for Mrs. Marks found her

lying across the fender."

"Dear, dear! What trouble these work-people always seem to be getting into. Yes, of course, have her taken to the hospital at once," and he wrote an order while he spoke. "Let the girl know, and give her leave for a few hours. I daresay I may look in myself in the course of the day."

The only uncertainty in the Arundale factory was Max Schippheim's movements, which were purposely erratic, and always gave the idea that he was constantly on the

look-out for inattention or incapability.

Having dismissed Andrews, he followed M. Brumeau, who had already gone into the painting-room, and, looking round him, had taken in at a glance the style of the work that was going on. He agreed with Lady Muriel that it was cramped, and, as far as he could see from a mere superficial glance, very much wanting in originality.

By the time Mr. Schippheim had joined him he had snatched the brush out of the hand of a man who was daubing a somewhat wooden representation of "La Chasse de Diane" on a large plateau that had been ordered as a mantel ornament for a country house, and with two or three touches he gave a fire and vigor to the lifeless scene, which the artist engaged on it, with all the perseverance he possessed, would not have imparted for a century. Mr. Schippheim stood looking over his shoulder, a highly satisfied expression on his frank, open face. Paul Brumeau had scored one in the chief's estimation by the

masterful strokes he had drawn that day. He scored his second point to the good a little later on, when the work

of the new designer was shown round the atelier.

He probably made one or two enemies by letting his fellow painters see how superior he was to them all; still, not one among them but was compelled to acknowledge the fact.

CHAPTER IV.

OLD GRANNY.

"GRANNY very ill and like to die! Oh, God, what

shall I do?"

It was Patty's heart cry when the news of her grandmother having had a fit was broken to her as gently by the foreman as a rough but kindly nature knew how.

"She will be well taken care of in the hospital. The

master says you may go to her at once."

"To the hospital! My grauny! Who sent her there? Whatever right had anyone to send my granny to the hospital?"

"And why not?" asked the foreman. "She will be

But Patty interrupted.

"Cos a hospital is only fit for paupers," she cried, "and my granny ain't a pauper. I wonder whatever I work and slave in this blessed factory for if it ain't to

keep her from want?"

"The workers here receive the benefits their position gives them without being considered paupers. The hospital is a place in which only the sick belonging to the Arundale manufactory are nursed. It is not a poorhouse."

Patty turned round suddenly when she heard these words, and found herself face to face with Mr. Schippheim. It was the first time the master had ever spoken to her, and his tone and manner, though kind, awed her somewhat, and she dropped her eyes and colored up without answering.

Max Schippheim went on.

"I am sorry, my child, that you should have mistaken

the nature of the institution which has been formed solely to minister to the requirements of those who are ailing. Suppose you walk down there now with me and see if your grandmother is not very comfortable."

"With you, sir!" and Patty, though she raised her eyes and glanced just one moment at Mr. Schippheim, grew

even more crimson than she was before.

He saw her confusion and without farther words led the way for her to follow him downstairs out of the women's workshop into the street, and many were the eyes that looked round in utter surprise as they saw these

two together.

"Wonders is multiplying in Arundale this blazing summer time," said one woman to another, as they stared from the upper window of the room Patty had just quitted. "Yesterday there was the Dale House carriage out o' the Sabbath, and to-day there's the master walking i' the town wi' the likes o' Patty Urske."

"Don't you know Patty Urske is a wench what apes

the lady?" answered her companion, with a laugh.

"Do she? Well, I hope she'll live till that there time

arrives when she will be a lady."

Meantime, very few words were spoken by either Mr. Schippheim or Patty as they walked along at a brisk pace, but it struck the master that she was a very tidy, clean-looking girl, of which he was fully aware there were not many specimens to be found in Arundale; with all his capability of organization, personal tidiness was a virtue with which he had not yet been able to inspire his people.

Whether he thought Patty the prettiest as well as the tidiest girl in Arundale was a subject on which he did not

allow his mind to dwell.

Arundale was a healthy place, and, with the exception of an occasional epidemic among the children, bar accidents, there was very little illness amongst the population.

The hospital then was not the very busiest place in Arundale; and, though it had been built to receive forty indoor patients, yet the beds were seldom all full, and some of the patients were occasionally put into separate wards. This was the case with old Mrs. Urske, not exactly because her state required it, or because she was supposed

to be of a superior class to the others, but to suit the

arrangements of the hospital.

Mr. Schippheim, on inquiring how and where the old woman was, was not altogether sorry to find that she had been placed alone. He felt a sort of sympathy for the mute proud sorrow of the girl by whose side he had walked through the streets of Arundale, and he felt that it would be some comfort to her to know that her occasional ministrations by the bedside of her aged relative would not be watched by the inquisitive eyes of strangers.

It was not often that Max Schippheim allowed himself to be moved by the trouble and sentiments of those about him. He had snubbed his feelings until he had got them under absolute control, and was regarded by those in his employment as a very just, if a somewhat stern, harsh

master.

Had he been asked for an explanation of his conduct at that moment, he would have told the querist that he was impelled to it by a mere love of psychological study. Patty, blunted and rendered cold and hard by the news of her grandmother's sudden indisposition roused his attention, and he would fain see to what this somewhat unusual bias would tend.

Query! Would he have been as interested in the analyzation of this little goldburnisher's feelings if she had not been very beautiful to look at, with her high coloring and

redundancy of auburn hair.

Mr. Schippheim did not profess to care for pretty faces, still the chances are he was at least averagely influenced

by them.

When Patti reached the door of the ward where her grandmother was lying, she stopped and leaned for a second or two against the wall, as though she almost dreaded to enter.

Mr. Schippheim took her little well-formed hand stained as it was by the work in which she had been engaged, and led her forward to the bed.

Then for the first time did Patty cry out in her deep grief as she threw herself on her knees beside her uncon-

scious grandmother, and burst into a flood of tears.

"Oh, my poor old Granny, what shall I make o' life without ye. You have been kind and good to me, and I've loved you with all my heart—that I have," she ejaculated

between her sobs. As she saw her Granny lying there the petty jars and tiresome temper which had, at times, created discord between them, were alike forgotten. All Patty remembered at that moment was that she was about to lose her for ever, and that a lonesome path lay before her.

Grief is always selfish, ay is it; if it did not rend our own heart-strings it would cease to be grief. And Patty's were rent that day as she looked at that flickering well-spent life-flame and wondered, as she repeated over and over again:—

"What will I make o' life without ye?"

All her ambitious dreams, for the moment at all events, had faded, and before the awesomeness of death she felt as helpless as the babe she was when years ago she clung to old Granny's hand to guide her first tottering steps across the room.

Yet old Granny could not have been of much further assistance to Patty had she not been called to seek her rest. It was only in imagination, fevered by excitement, that Patty could have believed in her directing power; still, the wrench was none the less real because the actual loss Patty would sustain did not exist as completely as she thought for the moment.

Who does not know what a dreary waste ground that is on which we stand while old associations, old habits, old memories are being swept away, and we have not yet formed new ties to give life fresh interest, and in all

probability, a new complexion and character?

Patty was standing on the verge of such a desert now. She had no one on earth to love but querulous old Granny, no future to look forward to but that which she should make or mar for herself; and that horizon where the sun was faintly rising across the waste was so far off that Patty's vision blinded by grief, could scarcely distinguish it, as she murmured softly over and over to herself:—

No, not even when a hand was laid on her shoulder,

and a voice said in kindly accents:-

"Do not fret my girl; you shall never want a friend."
Patty looked up and met the soft eyes of Sister Lucy,
the matron of the hospital, looking at her from the opposite side of the bed.

But it was not Sister Lucy who had spoken, and Patty

turned round half bewildered.

She had entirely forgotten the very existence of Max Schippheim. She gazed at him for a second or two with an expression of blank wonder, as if asking how he could pretend to fill the place of her Granny. Then she turned away from him back to her contemplation of all that bed contained for her.

She sat down on it and took the dying woman's hand, hardened by toil, and kissed it over and over again, but not a ray of recognition did these kisses bring on the

withered old face.

Mrs. Urske, as far as anything she seemed to feel or know, was already dead, passing slowly but surely through the dark valley.

"In less than an hour it will be all over," Sister Lucy said, as she glided across the room from behind Mr.

Schippheim.

"Take care of the girl and let me know what happens,"

he replied, in the same soft tones.

But Patty would not allow herself to be taken care of

in the manner Mr. Schippheim had suggested.

Some two hours later, when it was indeed all over, and the door of the room where Granny lay in her last sleep was closed, she refused to be comforted by any words the kindly sister could offer, and also declined to stay on with them in the hospital, which they vainly tried to persuade her to do till Mr. Schippheim could be communicated with.

"She must fend for herself in life now," she said. "what good to wait for this person or that? Best begin

at once as she meant to go along."

Altogether her grief seemed to the sisters so much more like that of some wild animal than of a rational human being that they could not understand her, and felt compelled to let her do as she liked.

She left the hospital about four o'clock, when the town was the quietest, all the workers being in the factory; and sped along to gain her lonely room in the cottage at the

bottom of the hill.

She had not proceeded very far before she was stopped by a voice saying:—

"Patty, lass, don't ee go to that lonesome room. There's

a home for ye till ye can turn yerself a bit. Mother will only be too glad to do a woman's friendly part by ye."

Joe Marks was coming in search of her. He had thrown up his half-day's work and its pay, to see if he could not

comfort Patty in her trouble.

"If she was happy I know well enow she'd have none of me; but now she's thrawed, may be I can help her a bit," he had said to himself, when the news reached him that Mrs. Urske was dead. He was the second man to-day who had spoken to Patty in a friendly voice, and she was well nigh as deaf to the one as the other.

"Not now, Joe, not now," she said, "may be later I'll come to Mrs. Marks for counsel, but now I must go

home."

"Home, there all alone! O, Patty!"

"Hush, Joe, don't contradict me, I must have my way to-day. I'm all right; don't you trouble; thank you all the same."

She held out her hand to him. He took it and pressed it warmly although disappointed that she would accept no sympathy. He had no time to tell her so, however, for she was gone, gone to brood over her sorrow in solitude, leaving Joe to stand there muttering:—

"Don't trouble. To think as I can see them pink

rimmed eyes and that white face and not trouble."

CHAPTER V.

LADY MURIEL'S SECRET.

Laid out in the Italian style, with bright flower beds, numberless stucco vases, and figures placed in every available position, the gardens at Dale House slope down hill; like everything else within a radius of three miles, they are under the personal supervision of Lady Muriel. She is strolling there now, watering-pot in hand, the hot hours of the August day having been succeeded by a calm, soft, dewy evening. But she is scarcely thinking of the thirsty plants which are her usual care at that hour. She is in deep conversation with M. Paul Brumeau, who has been three weeks at Arundale, and has already begun a new epoch in the artistic department.

He is relating some of his new experiences, giving Lady Muriel many valuable hints about the capabilities and state of the people generally, putting power into her hands in fact, a power which neither her husband nor Max would give her, knowing as they both full well do know, how active she would be in the use of it.

Yes truly the little French artist will prove a powerful ally for Lady Muriel, though it is also just possible that he may, at the same time, be a very troublesome one.

There are secrets in Lady Muriel's life which she would not altogether care for M. Paul Brumeau to fathom, and from what he has told her of the affairs of others it would almost seem that he is a restless ferret, and employs his recreation hours, when he is not engrossed by his art, in man's usual amusement, hunting—only in the case of M. Brumeau it takes the form of hunting up other people's affairs to such an extent that if he had not been born an artist he might well have been a detective. "Le petit mouchard," being a sobriquet very freely bestowed on him in the great factory he had just quitted.

Lady Muriel had taken violently to M. Brumeau, with an impetuous keenness which was wont to mark her actions. She had arranged his rooms for him; found him a thrifty, honest housekeeper; bade him come and dine at Dale House when he was bored; undertaken the reformation of his toilet; in fact made him utterly and entirely her

protégé.

Clever woman though she was, she had never calculated on what all this sudden intimacy with a little foreigner of low origin might entail, or perhaps she reckoned too much on her own cleverness, and thought she could throw him off like an old glove whenever he genéd her or she

grew tired of wearing him.

Now, no one either in Arundale or out of it imagined that Lady Muriel had married Mr. Alston for love. To look at them was quite sufficient to make you think them an ill-assorted couple, and when you listened to the kind of forced friendliness they indulged in toward each other there remained no doubt on your mind that so delicate a flower as love had never grown about their path.

Paul Brumeau, with his sagacity, found this out the first evening he was at Dale House, nay more, he discovered yet another secret, which Lady Muriel would cer-

tainly have preferred him not to possess—a secret which she was living calmly in the belief that no one in Arundale knew—that she cared for someone who was not her husband.

Before her marriage Lady Muriel had loved and been beloved by a young soldier whom she did not marry solely because, though he had remote expectations, he was penniless, and Lady Muriel was too heartless to throw away the rich position of being Mr. Alston's wife for the distant chance of some day, when they were both very old, having enough money to marry the man she loved.

That this man was the fair-bearded Christian who passed for a soupirant of Miss Yorke it took Paul Brumeau but a few hours to discover, though all the detail of how and when, and in what form he and Lady Muriel had met

naturally entailed a much longer investigation.

Christian Meyer, a captain in the 130th Foot called under the new regulations the Royal Plowshare Regiment, was a nephew of the senior partner, and, therefore quite on his own ground during the frequent visits he paid to Arundale; that is, he came there whenever he could get any leave, invariably residing at Dale House. The somewhat ascetic quarters his uncle lived in in the factory jarred on the refined senses of this pampered and

"curled darling."

Although Mr. Alston and Mr. Schippheim were not on the very best of terms as partners, yet Mr. Alston never objected to Captain Christian's presence at Arundale. He was always called Captain Christian, his uncle having started the familiar cognomem when he first got his captaincy. The reason of this unfailing hospitality on Herbert Alston's part was that he considered himself under a sort of obligation to Christian for having married Lady Muriel at all, and though he did not exactly love her he was very proud of the connection and the title. In an unlucky moment for himself Christian had introduced these two people without in the least anticipating what would come of the introduction, or how he would be made the tool of Lady Muriel, and compelled passively to almost assist a union which, to say the least, placed him in a very false position, a position which no man of spirit, having a high sense of honor, would have tolerated for half-anhour.

He had certainly threatened more than once to exchange into another regiment and go abroad for years, absenting himself virtually for six months or so at the time of the marriage; but, poor moth that he was, he had come back to flutter about the flame, and he had fluttered there ever since, just keeping his wings at sufficient distance not to be burnt.

Hence Mr. Alston had never found out the truth, and— "Such a good match for Bertha, wouldn't it be, Herbert, since old Max is sure to leave all his savings to Christian, isn't he?"

"Savings, yes, and a jolly lot there'll be. He is the stingiest old curmudgeon that ever conducted a business."

"Wise man, wise man, my dear Herbert; there is nothing like having money to leave your heirs, especially when a man is a bachelor. It would be so selfish to spend it on himself; if he had a wife it would be different."

"Hang himself! I'm thinking of the business; he never will open out and extend matters. Doesn't see his

way clearly, he says."

"And I'm thinking of Bertha and Christian—so nice for them, you see."

"Has Christian proposed to Bertha?"

"No, of course not; how can he till he has the money?

But I am pretty sure of his sentiments."

"Humph! Slippery, I call it," and Mr. Alston would go off, reflecting that he supposed his wife knew all about it, and therefore it was all right. Not once, but many a time, did this sort of conversation occur between these spouses, the particular one in question having taken place on the very day M. Paul Brumeau had made his first appearance at Arundale. If, however, she hoodwinked her husband by these shuffling assertions, she failed utterly to deceive Paul Brumeau. And by the time he had been in Arundale three weeks he was particularly impressed by the manner in which Lady Muriel retained Captain Christian as a dangler, and at the same time coolly gave out that he was devoted to Bertha.

On that hot August evening, when Lady Muriel, watering-pot in hand, had gone down into the garden to tend some pet plants she never intrusted to the gardener, Paul Brumeau had joined her there, more from a love of mischief than because he had anything definite to say. He

had a suspicion that Captain Christian was in the habit of wandering by her side at this honr, and he wanted to

see for himself what was going on.

He was, however, disappointed; there was no one there, and the watering was quickly deposed for a chat with M. Brumeau on the idiosyncracies of Arundale generally, Lady Muriel even professing to be glad that it had occurred to him that he would find her unengaged in the evening.

They had talked so long that it was growing quite dark, Lady Muriel still deeply interested in all he had to relate, when suddenly some one sprang over the hedge which

divided the lower part of the garden from a copse.

"Only think what I have discovered. Now, that old

fool of an uncle of mine-"

It was Christian. He stopped, and seemed dismayed when he saw that she was alone, but in another second, when he saw that her companion was Paul Brumeau, he

recovered his equilibrium.

"The little French ass can't understand much English, so it does not matter what I say," he thought as he proceeded to finish his original sentence, paying no heed to a remark of Lady Muriel that he should not speak disrespectfully of his uncle.

"He is a fool, a perfect fool. Will you believe it, he has actually taken up that Urske girl whose grandmother

died in the hospital a week or two ago."

"Nonsense! what utter nonsense, Christian."

"It is as true as the Bible. I met them walking along the road about half-a-mile out of the town, only an hour ago."

"Mr. Schippheim, the senior partner, walking with one of the 'hands'? Really, Christian, you must be joking. Whatever Mr. Schippheim is he is essentially respectable."

"Respectable or not, I met them, and a nice idiot he looked. He colored up when he saw me, as if he had been a girl of seventeen."

"And what is she like, that Urske girl as you call her?"
"Pretty, deuced pretty. Patty Urske is the beauty of

Arundale. Don't you know her, Lady Muriel?"

Lady Muriel shrugged her shoulders and looked angry. "How could she be expected to know all the little drabs in Arundale?" she said.

"You do know her, though, by sight, that is to say. She is the beauty you admired standing by the door as we drove through the town to fetch M. Brumeau from the station."

"Indeed!"

And even in the semi-darkness they could see the circumflex accent her eyebrows formed.

She turned to M. Brumeau and informed him in French

of the facts Christian had just made known to her.

He laughed at their astonishment—to him it did not seem an event of singular strangeness that Mr. Schippheim should take a walk on a hot summer evening with a pretty girl, but then he did not know the senior partner's former habits as well as these people did.

He made a note in his mind, however, that he would watch, and wondered how it was that this episode in Arundale life had escaped him.

If he only understood English better, how much more would he be able to ascertain of what was going on; he resolved forthwith to conquer the, to him, unmusical and difficult language, and Paul Brumeau was not the sort of man, when once determined to use his brain, to allow himself to be easily foiled. Moreover, the amount of English that is now taught in all the French lycées and schools had given him a very fair start in acquiring the language he was resolved to master.

Thus if he had not learnt this evening anything new on the subject which had brought him to Dale House, his visit there had, at all events, not been wholly fruitless, and having taken a polite leave of Christian and Lady Muriel, he strolled off home to the pretty rooms which had been allotted to him in the factory, revolving many things in his mind meanwhile, and wondering what this Patty was like whom Mr. Schippheim deemed worthy of his admiration. He even went so far as to go a considerable distance out of his way in order to pass the cottage in which Patty still lived. It was all in darkness, however. The good people of Arundale were not wont to sit up late at night burning coals and candles; the hours for work at the factory got them up too early in the morning.

"I wonder I have never noticed this little girl since she is the belle of Arundale," he muttered to himself; "but,

true, I do not go very frequently into the burnishers'

rooms. Ah, tiens, what is that?"

Some one was speeding along the road at a vigorous pace behind him, stopping short, however, at the cottage, at the windows of which he still stood gazing in an abstracted way. So swift were the movements of the individual in question that she came in collision with the little artist, who had a very narrow escape of being thrown on the ground.

He tottered, seizing the palings to steady himself, and looked eagerly in the face of this somewhat unexpected

pursuer.

It was Patty herself, but though Paul Brumeau was not positive of this, the gleam of light whith fell on her face in the starlit darkness of the summer night told him she was beautiful, quite as beautiful as he had been led to expect.

"Mademoiselle!" he exclaimed, with a mixture of sur-

prise and politeness which was essentially French.

"Beg your pardon, sir, I am sure, but I was in a hurry to get home; and, besides, I thought as there was some

one a bowling along the road behind me."

M. Brumeau did not understand this style of English, but he stood gazing at her, in no hurry, apparently to depart.

And while he stood there she could not get to the gate,

for he was right in front of it.

"Let me pass, if you please," asked Patty, politely.

Still he did not budge.

She began to get angry. For some reason she wanted to get into the cottage and shut the door, and this impediment in her way irritated her.

"Get out of the road," she cried. "What right have

you to be sticking here at my gate?"

The Frenchman, seeing her flashing eyes, which shone like two additional stars in the darkness, began a speech in very broken English, and to emphasize it, he was just raising his hand to remove his hat, which was a stiff wideawake, when it was thrust violently down on to his brows by a blow from behind.

"Ye little sneaking dirty furrineer! I'll teach ye to molest this yere young woman," said a man's voice. The Arundale wenches don't want no furrineers; they

has lots of English lads who courts 'em 'specially Patty; so just ye let her be."

"Oh, Joe-this gentleman-"

"Don't you interfere, my girl. Just you go into your own room and leave this yere fellow to me."

"But, Joe, he has done nothing."

"Hasn't he? Then what was you a running for, as if the devil hisself was at your heels; and why was you a ordering him to get out of the road? Always thought as no good would come of it when I heard as a furrineer was coming to do the painting."

"Mon cher jeune homme, je vous assure--"

"None of your confounded jargon, if you please," interrupted Joe, with dogged insolence. "If you leave our women folk alone, we'll leave you alone, else you'll get a hottish time of it in Arundale."

With that he opened the gate.

"You'd best go in, Patty. Why ever do you stand

staring there?"

"'Cos I choose, I suppose," she answered, rather pertly. "Whatever you mean by interfering with Mounseer, I can't think. You'd best go home and mind your old mother."

With that she bounced into the house and slammed the

door.

Her words had had effect, however; they had taken the sting out of Joe, and he did not answer Brumeau, who stood there vociferating volubly in his own language for some seconds, threatening Joe with every variety of punishment for to-night's interference.

Not that Joe would have understood one word had he been inclined to listen. Even after Mr. Brumeau moved off, still muttering as he walked along, Joe remained for some time very passive; then he, too, held commune

with himself.

"And to think as she should talk to me like that. 'Mind yer old mother;' which means in course, that she don't want no minding o' mine. O, Patty, Patty!"

CHAPTER VI.

ONLY PLAYMATING.

THE large clock in the quadrangle nad just struck twelve, and all the workers, both male and female, were trooping out of the manufactory hastening home for their noontide dinner.

Patty, in her little scrimpy black frock, with a clean linen collar round her well shaped throat, and a neat black bonnet sitting lightly on her auburn hair, was among the last to come.

Joe was waiting for her by a little gate through which

he knew she must pass.

He had not seen her since he thought fit to smash M. Brumeau's hat over his brows, now two evenings ago, ever since which time her last sentence had been rankling in his mind.

She wished him good morning very gently when she saw him now, and tried to pass on, but Joe seemed bent

on having some conversation.

"Tain't well, Patty, as you should cut your old friends. What have they done as you shouldn't care to chum with them no longer?"

"Nothing, Joe. Who said as I wished to cut them?"

and Patty colored up and looked very hot.

"All Arundale is a-saying as you is stuck up, and all along o' the master making much of you. It grieves my heart to hear it, Patty, lass. The master is a good, honest man, and he's sorry for the trouble as you've had o' late, but his kindness ain't no kindness at all if it's going to bewilder your pretty head and take ye away from your own folk."

"My own folk, indeed! I don't know what you mean,

Joe. I haven't a relation left in Arundale."

"Friends is sometimes more nor relations, Patty, and you ain't friendless as I know on; and not being friend-

less I thought I might just say a word or two."

"I suppose you place yourself as first friend, Mr. Joseph Marks?" and there was a tone of irony in her voice which jarred on the man's ear.

"Tain't a friend as I'd be to ye, Patty, but a lover and a husband if ye'd let me."

"There's time enow for me to think of marriage, Joe.

It ain't in my thoughts at present if-"

"No, Patty, don't I know well that it ain't in yer thoughts. It's full of philandering as yer heart is filled for mounseers and such like; but they'll bring ye to ruin, my lass, take my word for it, and I'll always be truer to

yer than any of they would-be gentry folk."

"What nonsense you are talking, Joe. What are you driving at with your foreign mounseers? I'd never spoken to Mounseer Paul till the words you yourself heard, nor since till this very morning, when—But why should I explain to you? you ain't nothing to me as I knows of."

"Haven't we been sweetheartin' these eighteen months,

lass?"

"Not sweetheartin' as I knows on, only playmatin', Joe."

"Well, playmatin', if you like the word better. Then can't you tell your old playmate where you'd been that there night as I met ye and the mounseer at the cottage door?"

"That's my secret, Joe, and I can't tell you nor any other. All I will tell you is that I hadn't been with the mounseer. That I'll give yer my hand on if that'll content ye."

"I s'pose it must," said Joe, looking, however, scarce-

ly satisfied, while Patty went on-

"And since you're talking of advice, just let me give ye one word. I'd make a bit of apology to Mounseer Paul if I was you, Joe. He don't look upon you in the most favorable way, and you was wrong to do what you did."

"Apologize—say as I'm sorry? No, that I'm d——d

if I do!"

And Joe, in his anger, used language which, coming of a rough stock though he did, he was too gentle by nature

to have used before Patty without provocation.

"Well, it's for your own good as I'm speaking, Joe. Mounseer Paul has a good bit in his power in the factory, and I shouldn't wonder if he was to harm you if you make an enemy of him, which I shrewdly suspect you will if you don't take care."

"There's other factories in the country besides Arun-

dale. I ain't tied to this danged place, be I?"

"Oh, if you mean to go away, Joe,—well, there's no occasion for me to say nothing; but wherever be ye meaning to go?"

"Nowhere, lass, unless you drive me to it."

"I have nothing to do with whether you go or stay."

"Patty, that's false, and you know it. Just you give me a word of hope, girl, tell me as some day ye'll put yerself and yer happiness in my keeping, and I'll lie down and lick the dust off that there Frenchman's shoes if you wish it."

"It was for your own sake, not for mine, as I suggested you should be civil to Mounseer Paul, Joe. I didn't want you to do no licking."

"Then you won't give me no encouragement, no

kindly word, Patty?"

"Really, Joe, I don't know what you mean or want. I've told you as I ain't thinking of marryin'. Why can't you be a good friend without botherin' about marriage! It might come some day but I don't say as it will."

"Would it make you sorry, Patty, if I was to go away

right out of Arundale?"

"Why yes, of course it would, Joe."

"Then, if you wish me to stop, I'll stop whatever befalls, and if I can be of any use to ye just tell me so; you've only to say the word, lass, and it's stay or go, whichever you please."

"I'd sooner have you in Arundale than out of it, Joe, but I ain't going to say 'Stay' if it binds me to be more

to you than I am at this moment."

"All right, lass, you shall be free, only promise that if there's any difficulty, any thorns and brambles in your path, you'll come to me to level 'em down."

"Yes, Joe, and gladly, and having settled that I must go, or I sha'n't have time to get my dinner before the bell

rings."

So saying Patty tripped away much more light-hearted than poor Joe was, though he was thankful, too, for the crumbs she had thrown him, and looked upon it as no mean advantage gained to be permitted to watch her onward course, and occasionally to kick the rough bits out of her life. Considering how very recently old Mrs. Urske had died, and how Patty had bewailed her loss and dreaded her own loneliness, she had very speedily given up the contemplation of the double event, for when she got home after her conversation with Joe, and, taking off her bonnet, ran her fingers through her fluffy hair, she looked the very picture of content and satisfaction. She got her dinner out of a cupboard by the fireplace, and setting it on a table near the window, began to eat it while she watched

the passers-by.

"Marry Joe!" she muttered to herself, meanwhile, "no, I don't think as I shall ever marry Joe," and she put down her fork and looked at her left hand. "Wonder if them lines be true, 'long life and a good marriage;' that's what the gipsy as was here last fair time told me. Now Joe wouldn't be a good marriage, quite the contrary, though he is a good creature, just the sort to depend on and make a friend of. I sha'n't have no luck in life if I don't keep friends with Joe. Fancy his talking of going right away; he won't now, though, I'm thinking. Oh my stars, whoever is that coming in at the gate! Lady Muriel and Miss Yorke—well to be sure, who can they be wanting!"

"Does Patty Urske live here!" asks Lady Muriel's

voice of a woman standing at the door.

"Lor' bless us, it's me they want," and instinctively Patty's hands smoothed her hair, while some one from the outside opened the door to admit her visitors. Patty dropped a little courtesy and looked very demure.

"You are Patty Urske, I think. May we come in for

a moment?"

"Certainly, my lady, and welcome, but please excuse the room; it is very untidy; it has never been nothing since my old Granny died; she was that particular."

"I suppose, engaged as you are at the factory, you have

no time to keep the place tidy."

"Tain't that, your ladyship, I used to do it for Granny; suppose it is I haven't the heart to do it for myself."

"You have no father or mother?"

"No, my lady."

"Nor brother or sister?"

"No, my lady."

"And you live here quite alone?"

"Yes, my lady."

"But do you think it is quite nice and discreet, for a young girl like you to live all alone?"

"Don't know what you mean, my lady. I ain't got no

kith nor kin, and I can't make 'em."

"But you might live with some woman who would look after you."

"Poor folk don't want no looking after; they can take

care of themselves."

"How old are you?"
"Nineteen, my lady."

"Only nineteen! If I were you, Patty, I would arrange to live with someone, old Mrs. Marks for instance; it would be far more respectable and proper."

"Please, my lady, I'd rather not—as long as I can pay my way and keep this small room, I'd as lief stay in it."

"But it is very wrong and gives rise to scandal. I really cannot countenance it. Do you know you are already being talked of?"

"Whoever has been talking, and what have they got to say?" cried Patty, firing up; "it ain't Joe Marks as has

been talking, is it, my lady?"

"I never spoke to Joe Marks in my life, nor is the gossip altogether about him, but the account of a very unpleasant little affair that took place at your gate two nights ago has reached me, and considering the interest I take in everything connected with Arundale I thought I would speak with yourself on the subject."

"It ain't nothing to do with me. It was all the fault of the furrineer; he was standing agen the gate, and I couldn't get past. Joe thought as he was molesting me, and had a mind to lynch him; but it was all a mistake, my lady and Joe has promised me this very day as he'll

make an apology to Mounseer Paul."

"I should doubt if he will accept it, only I know him to be a very good-natured man. But that is not the point. This sort of thing must not occur again, or Arundale, renowned for the respectability of its inhabitants, will get into bad repute. If you were living in a proper way, with some female friend, men would not dare to molest you; it is only because you are unprotected that they do not leave you alone."

"I think as I have a pretty good protector in Joe," said

Patty, with a sly smile.

"That is not at all the sort of thing that can be tolerated, girl—that will bring disgrace on you; it is nothing to be proud of. Are you going to marry Joe?"

"No, my lady; I have no such intention. He's more

like my brother, as it were,"

"Such being the case, it would suit admirably for you to have a home with Mrs. Marks. She's quite willing, I believe."

"But, please, my lady, I would rather not go. I'm best here by myself. Mrs. Marks and me would never get on."

"Well, Patty, you are a very foolish girl; if you go and live quietly with the Marks, and keep yourself respectable, there's no saying what I may do for you. I daresay, notwithstanding your denying it, that you will one day marry Joe, and I will help you to the very uttermost."

"Thank you," said Patty, very shortly, no more; what she thought was—"Marry Joe, and be patronized by Lady Muriel! No, no; that ain't at all the fulfillment of my dreams, nor yet the plan by which I mean to work out my

life."

Lady Muriel evidently saw a refusal in her flashing

eyes, for she said-

"Of course I cannot force you or ask you to obey me in this matter. I can only advise and suggest that for your

own sake you should agree to my wishes."

"I'll think about it," said Patty, with much less politeness than she had displayed during the earlier part of the interview. I'll think about going somewhere else; but I don't suppose I shall go to Marks's."

"When do you think you will have made up your

mind?"

"P'r'aps this afternoon, p'r'aps to-morrow."

"Poor Patty! Doubtless it is a trouble to you to leave the place where you used to live with your grandmother?"

It was Bertha Yorke who said this, very gently laying her hand on the girl's shoulder; and Patty did not attempt to resent, as she usually did resent, pity or what she considered any undue amount of interest. There was something graceful and sweet and refined about Bertha that had always attracted Patty when she saw her go by, and she felt she would like to have this pretty young lady for

a friend. She had never spoken to her before, nor indeed, to Lady Muriel, but while the charm of the one woman seemed to increase by proximity, that of the other was

entirely dispelled.

"And lady though Miss Yorke be, she ain't so well off as I am in life if she has to bide always with her, for I'm much mistaken if she isn't a Tartar," was the conclusion Patty arrived at after they had taken their departure, which they did a little later, Patty having promised she would give the matter every consideration.

"And to think of her catechising me like that! Marry Joe and be dependent on her—not if I know it. I've got a better friend than she would ever be. She hasn't found that out. Don't know as the master has promised to look after me. She'll be for grudging me that next."

And Patty, without finishing her still half-eaten dinner, ran off back to the factory, where the bell was al-

ready ringing.

She was entirely mistaken, however, in the view she had taken of Lady Muriel's knowledge, but how could Patty, acute girl, though she was, be any match in

diplomacy for this clever woman of the world?

She was far too honest herself for it to occur to her that Lady Muriel could almost have counted the times she had met Mr. Schippheim, even if she was not also aware of all that had been said during these meetings. Her object was, if possible, to get Patty into her power without letting the girl suspect she had any special reason for doing so.

Patty, however, had determined to do nothing without

first consulting Mr. Schippheim.

"He was the master," she argued, and it was with this object that she had deferred giving any definite answer till the following day.

CHAPTER VII.

ONLY BERTHA.

BERTHA YORKE'S position at Dale House was an anomalous one, and one which the world in general did not understand.

"She was a poor relation of Lady Muriel's, kept there as a companion and souffre-douleur, solely out of charity,"

so people whispered, beneath their breaths; not the Arundale people, but those connected with Lady Muriel's own world.

No one contradicted them or offered any explanation, probably because the rumors which were afloat failed to reach the very individuals who were the most interested in hearing them. Bertha Yorke was an orphan, perhaps that was why she felt such a friendly interest in Patty; but she was not a poor relation.

Her father had left her ten thousand pounds when he died some two years previously, left it entirely in the hands of Herbert Alston, who was appointed her guardian till she became of age.

Bertha was fifteen when her father died, and she had at once gone to live with Lady Muriel. She was just good-looking enough to be interesting to some people, but just plain enough to serve as a foil to Lady Muriel, with whose symmetry of form and majesty of manner she could in no way compete; and it probably arose from the fact of her looking up to Lady Muriel as though she were some exalted personage belonging to another sphere that gave everyone the idea that she subsisted on the Alston's charity.

Poor little Bertha! she certainly never put herself forward in the very least; she was always getting away into corners and trying to be neither seen nor heard, principally because she was very shy and was always afraid some one would speak to her.

None of the visitors at Dale House, however, troubled her much, Lady Muriel's somewhat deteriorating appellation of "only Bertha" not being a particularly encouraging one. If some of the people would have taken the trouble to inquire for themselves they might perhaps have been a little astonished at the depth of feeling that quiet little person possessed and the amount of mental power "only Bertha" was each day cultivating more and more. Even Lady Muriel did not understand Bertha, partly because she did not give herself the trouble to do so, but principally because Bertha never unfolded before Lady Muriel, who would dismiss the subject when questioned about her protégée's capabilities by saying—

"Oh, she is a quiet little shy mousey fool of ordinary

intelligence; but she is devoted to me, would go through

fire and water to serve me."

Did Lady Muriel love her? Yes, after her fashion, as much as she could love anything beyond her own interest. The girl was sympathetic to her, and helped her in many ways, being always pleased with an opportunity of making herself useful to Lady Muriel, for whom she had a sort of mute devotion. Whatever domestic or social duty was intrusted to Bertha, she always tried to carry it out in a manner which she thought would please Lady Muriel, and be the most in accordance with her own system.

Lady Muriel was always the first person in Bertha's thoughts. "Will cousin Muriel like it? What will cousin Muriel say?" carrying the almost abject homage to a degree which would have somewhat bored her ideal if she had not been a woman who, always seeking to govern others, encouraged an unlimited amount of deference in return.

She did not, perhaps, in her heart respect Bertha any the more for this sort of dog-like fidelity; she really preferred people who ran alone and exhibited more spirit than Bertha had hitherto shown—that is, she admired their characters, though perhaps they did not altogether suit her purpose the best.

"Bertha was just the sort of girl," she was wont to

say, "that you could get on well with."

But Bertha, at seventeen, was slowly developing, and it was very certain her character was as yet unfathomed by those about her.

Christian Meyer would be a good match for her some day when she was older, Lady Muriel had told her more than once, and the idea was by no means distasteful to Bertha.

"Of course," Lady Muriel would add, "there is time enough. You cannot have your own money till you are twenty-one, and Christian would be foolish to pledge himself until he gets the promise of an allowance from his uncle."

"But you think he really cares for me, cousin Muriel?"

"Cares for you, child, what a silly question. Why is

he always here if he does not care for you?"

And after these snatches of talk Bertha would go away into some out-of-the-way corner of the garden or up in

the solitude of her own room, to ponder over the happy day, still some time distant, when she would be Christian's wife - Christian whom she revered with an intensity only second to that she bestowed on Lady Muriel herself, and loved, oh, yes, she loved him far more. She loved him as a young, ardent, trusting nature loves when the heart is first awakened to the tender passion. Whether Christian knew aught of the strong affection Bertha entertained for him, it were difficult to say; certain it is he had never asked her to love him; he had been merely aux petits soins with her in a flirtatious way, as a man may with a hundred pretty girls. It was Lady Muriel who had lighted the flame in Bertha's heart; it was Lady Muriel who by an occasional allusion sought to keep it just faintly ignited, without guessing in the least how deeply it was smoldering underneath, or what a volcanic eruption she was perhaps bringing about for some future day.

That Christian passed a great deal of time in attendance on Lady Muriel did not make Bertha jealous in the very

least.

If Lady Muriel had been an unmarried girl it might have been different, but she was far too simple-minded to augur danger from a married woman, and above all, that

married woman being her divinity, Lady Muriel.

Since M. Brumeau came, there had been far too much pressure on the domestic atmosphere to admit of any talk on the subject of Christian's love for Bertha, but the amiable relations which ever existed between them remained unchanged, and—owing to Lady Muriel's time being a good deal taken up by her hobby—they were necessarily thrown more together than usual. Bertha was very well content, and looked quite happy and blooming, even pretty, in her daintily-made pink or blue cotton frock, with her mousey hair neatly braided off her brow and plaited tp in large coils on the nape of her neck. The severely classical style of her ideal precluded all possibility of a fringe. Bertha, of course, therefore abjured fluffy hair, and expended much time in brushing and coaxing to keep her naturally rebellious locks in proper subjection. If Lady Muriel had said what her artist's eye had told her was the truth, she would have bade the girl let her hair bend and curl as it liked, since by picturesqueness alone would little insignificant Bertha make any mark in the world of beauty. But she was only Bertha," good as gold, but very plain; it did not matter how much she dressed or what she did.

If Bertha was somewhat slighted at Dale House, she was looked upon as an angel by the people in the factory. There was never a case of sickness or trouble in which Bertha was not in some way instrumental in helping or advising the sufferer, and if she had never gone near Patty Urske till the day she was taken there by Lady Muriel, it was because Mr. Schippheim would not allow the ladies at the house to interfere with his hospital, and since old Mrs. Urske's death Bertha had received orders from her commander, Lady Muriel, not to go and call on Patty without her. Lady Muriel had a mind to see for herself what this beauty was like that she had noticed by the cottage door, only other events had put Patty more or less out of her mind till she was forcibly brought before her notice by Christian's observations about his uncle and the subsequent account of the fracas by the gate.

That Patty was an objectionable addition to the Arundale workers Lady Muriel had decided when she first caught a glimpse of her that Sunday afternoon; for Lady Muriel, grande dame though she was, was jealous of every pretty face, even though the gift of beauty had been bestowed on one in all seeming so utterly out of her life as a poor work girl. When she had had a little conversation with Patty she was more inclined than ever to mark her "dangerous," especially since she had been told that Mr.

Schippheim elected to patronize her.

"She is a pert hussy," she said to Bertha as they toiled up the hill to the house, their visit being over. "I think you had better not go there, Bertha, without me; an im-

pertinent girl like that may be very rude to you."

"I am not afraid of her, cousin Muriel, and perhaps I might be able to humanize her a little. She is not the first of the Arundale people I have got an influence over. I'll go if you wish it."

"Humph!" said Lady Muriel, as she remained lost in

thought for a few minutes.

The result of her cogitations was to the effect that Bertha was to go and see Patty, find out all she could about her, and report it to Lady Muriel. She did not put this in plain language, because there was a quiet loyalty about Bertha which Lady Muriel respected without even

quite knowing it. That loyalty she more than half suspected would have made Bertha resent being sent as a spy even on lowly Patty, and Lady Muriel did not wish to lose one shred of Bertha's high esteem. She merely told her, as she habitually did, what she wished her to do, without giving her any reasons or even hinting at what she believed would be the result of her doings.

Having got leave to visit Patty, Bertha looked quite radiant. She had taken a great fancy to the lonely girl, and she resolved forthwith to make a humble friend of her. If there were hard strong bits in Patty's character, Bertha trusted that by means of gentleness and soft words

she might be enabled to smooth them down.

This was not exactly what Lady Muriel wanted. She wanted an eye kept on Patty in case of future mischief, but she generally looked on Bertha's sketchy schemes for moral reform as the mere harmless crotchets of a visionary, and so troubled herself very little about them.

Just as this subject was settled so far, and they were quite near home, the two ladies were overtaken by some

one.

"Good gracious, Mr. Schippheim, you up here at this

hour," cried Lady Muriel, in some surprise.

"You think I ought always to have my nose well to the grindstone, I suppose, and there is no work to be done so near Dale House. You are mistaken for once, Lady Muriel."

"How so?"

"I am going to have a new painting room built on the ridge yonder. The light will be so good. I have been choosing the ground."

"Why did you not ask me to come?"

"Because I thought you were better engaged, and that I could manage the affair with the assistance of M. Brumeau. And now, having given an account of my actions, pray tell me where you and Miss Bertha have been, since I find you toiling in the sun up from Arundale this hot morning."

Lady Muriel cast a silencing glance on Bertha, the meaning of which the girl in no wise understood, and said

quickly-

"Only seeing one or two of our poor neighbors and buying some ribbon for a sash for Eric. My brother and

his wife, the Auchinlees, are coming to-morrow, you

know. You'll come and dine, won't you?"

"Lord and Lady Auchinlee are much too grand folk for me. I never know what to say when I am in that sort of society."

"What nonsense, Mr. Schippheim!"

"It is quite true my dear lady. I am a man of a certain amount of means, gained, I hope, by honest labor; but I came of the people, and to the people I still belong. I am not one of those who care for a mixture of classes."

"I suppose you think Herbert made a mistake when he married me, or I made a mistake when I married him,

which was it, Mr. Schippheim?"

"I should not attempt to give any opinion on such a subject. Folk are the best judges for themselves in such matters."

"But you gave your sister's son, Christian Meyer, a good education, you put him in the army, and made a

gentleman of him."

"I do not consider that I have any right to keep another man down because I do not care to rise. Christian wished to go into the army, so he went. He hated pots and pans, he said; if he had liked them he would have been a rich man by this time; now, he is a poor one, that

is all the difference."

At this mention of Christian, Bertha grew crimson, but no one took any notice of it. The idea of Christian marrying Bertha had never reached Max Schippheim; perhaps he was too clever to believe in it though his seeming blindness was always ascribed to the supposition that such a thing as a love affair was quite beyond the limits of his understanding.

"Then you mean positively that you refuse to come

and meet the Auchinlees?"

"Positively, no; but I would rather not."

"You would rather meet some factory hands, I suppose," and Lady Muriel looked more than a little spiteful. He fixed his eye on her somewhat inquiringly for a second; then he answered—

"I do not understand your meaning; if I habitually associated with my work people they would scarcely respect me as a master. It would be a grievous mistake." The cool logic of this reply irritated Lady Muriel, but

she would not allow herself to be tempted into saying what she would afterward regret, so she changed the subject with adroitness, by saying—

"Well, come in to luncheon now you are up so far, and taste some Rudesheimer that was sent to Herbert as a

present the other day."

To refuse another invitation, Max felt would be ungracious, and though he seldom eat luncheon, yet he accompanied them to the house, where Christian was, as usual, lounging, book in hand, under the veranda.

He jumped up when he saw the trio, not altogether delighted at a meeting with his uncle, who was usually

pretty severe on Christian's shortenings.

Mr. Schippheim did not, however, seem inclined to take any particular notice of him that morning, but walked off with Bertha to look at some rose trees he had himself brought her from France a few months previously.

Bertha, though she was patrician-born, was a great

favorite with Max Schippheim.

Meanwhile Lady Muriel whispered to Christain—

"It is my belief old Max is quite mad. Every word is true about that girl; he does encourage her, I feel sure of it, and if we don't take stringent measures to stop it, there is no saying what will happen."

CHAPTER VIII.

HARD WORDS.

PATTY sat down to her work that hot August afternoon in anything but a contented and patient frame of mind.

Her independent spirit rebelled against interference.

"Great ladies should mind their own business," she repeated over and over again, mentally. "I would if I was a great lady. What right has Lady Muriel to come meddling with my affairs? I sha'n't go and live with Mrs. Marks. Joe is well enough and easy to manage, but Mrs. Marks—no, I'll leave Arundale first."

And the thought of leaving Arundale taking her by surprise, as it were, made her flush up and look so hot all of a sudden that the woman working next her, catching sight of her countenance for a minute, asked what was

the matter.

Patty did not vouchsafe a reply, but to her neighbor's mind, bent on discovery, her red face was explained by the appearance at that moment of M. Brumeau at the door; the truth, however, being that Patty had not even perceived him. She was too much engrossed in the contemplation of her own individual history.

What he came in there for no one could imagine. The chief designer had nothing in common with these mere machines there assembled, and had never been seen in that room before; but then everything was changed at Arundale of late, ever since this "furrineer" had come.

He did not address anyone in particular, but making the tour of the room he examined the work on which each woman was engaged, reaching Patty's place last of all.

It was a most unusual proceeding, Mr. Andrews, the foreman, being the functionary they all regarded as master after Mr. Schippheim, and every woman in the room left off her work to look round and wonder, while whispers of "What does it mean?" had culminated into a buzz by the time Paul Brumeau had reached the end of the long table where Patty was sitting.

Arrived there, he leant over her shoulder to look at her work, as he had leant over the others, and while he was in this position he made some remark in a very low tone,

which no one heard but herself.

While M. Brumeau had been slowly making the circuit of the table, Patty, to whom his presence or absence was perfectly indifferent, had recovered her usual calm aspect. When she heard whatever it was that in his broken English he had to communicate to her, a crimson flush once more rushed over her face, dying even her white neck with its blood-red hue. Not a "hand" in that room but saw it, and each one drew her own conclusion according as she esteemed Patty more or less highly. Whether Paul Brumeau had done this solely to compromise Patty, he himself only knew: if so he did not stay to reap the reward of his intrigue by reading the faces of those around, nor did he even wait for any answer from Patty, but passing quickly on, disappeared through a side door.

Then followed a perfect chorus of injurious remarks. "Well I never! To think as you're carryin' on with he."

"Takin' up with furrineers, and your poor Granny not cold in her grave."

"Joe shall know this afore to-night."

"Lor' bless ye, Joe's nothing; that's too respectable for

Patty. The person to tell is the master."

To these and many more such remarks did Patty sit listening with wide open eyes, the hot blood still mantling her brow, too bewildered for awhile to utter any retort.

It was all so sudden, so unexpected, she could not at first comprehend what it meant. At last, however, a consciousness of what was really passing seemed to come slowly over her, and the pent up words rushed impetuously forth.

"How dare you talk to me like this? If ye are women yerselves ye ought to protect and help me. You know well enough that I am straight and honest, and ye ought

to be ashamed of accusing me."

"We don't know naught about ye," cried one; "you

ain't Arundale born; how should we?"

"Arundale born or not, ye know as I am of a respectable people, and that if my Granny was alive you wouldn't dare to speak to me like this. You know as my people are better off than your people, and that I'm better born than even the best of ye, and that's why you're jealous and nasty, I 'spose; but it's no matter, I can fend my own way in life."

"Hoity-toity, Patty's going it. Better nor us. In course she thinks herself a lady already. She'll be going

in for silks and satins next."

"My stars, you must be a rare virtuous lot to dare to —Mrs. Capps too—to speak like that, for everyone knows she was—"

But Patty was interrupted by a very young girl, the only person in the room who had not spoken. She laid her hand on Patty's arm and implored her to say no more.

"Well, there, you're right, Elsie Bligh, it's contamination getting into a row like this. Such vermin as is in

this room ain't worth it."

"Look here, Patty Urske, you'd best mind what you're saying," and one of the women, a virage of about forty, got up, and standing with her arms akimbo, was evidently quite prepared for a fight.

Elsie Bligh, however, came once more to the rescue.

"Run away Patty; there's the quadrangle bell a ringing; you'd best go home and leave these hard names to cool."

Patty, though her temper had considerably got the better of her, had still enough sense left to see the wisdom of this advice. She had also the pluck to follow it, no moderate amount being required, since invectives hot and strong were hurled at her from all sides, and to a girl of Patty's violent character it required no little self control not to retort angrily.

Resolving to conquer herself, however, and half pushed out of the room by Elsie Bligh, she went quickly down the stairs into the quadrangle, and speeding across it so swiftly that several workmen loitering there looked round to ask of each other what ailed her, she ran home as though by rapid motion she would, if possible, shut out from her ears all the unpleasant words and recollections of that day. When she at last reached her solitary home, and the feeling suddenly came upon her that there was no one there to sympathize with her and care for her in her trouble, as old Granny, in spite of her cross ways, would have done, she broke down utterly, and throwing herself on her little bed, which stood in the corner, she burst into a flood of wild and passionate weeping.

At last, however, pent up feeling having found a passage in tears, she became to an extent, exhausted, and Patty sat up and looked about her, with her large, wild, swollen eyes.

"What have I done that I should be treated thus!" she asked, "all along o' that horrid little Mounseer too. I wish he was ducked in a pond, I do, and if Joe had the spirit of a fly, he'd duck him: but then Joe is like that—he's all words and no acts."

She forgot, with woman's usual illogic, that Joe had got himself into difficulties only two days before for tampering with the person of the very identical little Frenchman in question.

"I won't stand it. I'll do something, if it's to drown myself," and with that she jumped off the bed, and tossing her luxuriance of dark hair over her shoulders, began to walk up and down the room excitedly.

Half-an-hour passed and no one came near her. Elsie

Bligh passed the window twice. She would have much

liked to go in and comfort Patty.

Elsie wanted to warn Patty that she had best give in, and put up with whatever indignities her fellow-workers heaped upon her, unless she wished to suffer even more severely at their hands in the "Long Room."

Oh, if she only dared to go in!

She had arrived at the gate for the third time, and was just summoning up sufficient courage to open it, enter boldly, and say her little say, when a hand was laid on her shoulder, and turning round she looked straight into

the friendly eyes of the senior partner.

"Is Patty Urske within? I believe this is the cottage where she lives?" he asked, for Max Shippheim, though he had been so kind to Patty as to bring down a certain amount of scandal on her name, had never yet gone himself to her abode.

"Yes, sir, please, I think she is there; but she wasn't to blame, sir, indeed she wasn't," cried Elsie, in a voice

trembling with fright.

Mr. Schippheim looked at her very kindly, with a halfsmile that evidently encouraged her, for she went on-

"You won't be hard on Patty, will you, sir? for she's that unhappy without her old Granny."

"We shall see, we shall see; I can't make any promises, child, till I have heard what Patty has to say for herself. A disturbance like this in the factory is a grave offense."

So saying, he passed on through the gate into the house, from which Patty had already seen him through the

window.

He knocked loudly at the door, and asked for Patty Urske in a stentorian voice. Whatever evil tongues might say, it was evident that this visit from the master was to be no private one. Patty threw open the door and met him in the passage; her hair, which she had not had time to fasten up, was still almost clothing her as it hung in masses far below her waist.

"You wish to speak to me, sir!"

"Yes, Patty. I want to know what is the meaning of all this I have heard. Just come and talk to me here for a few minutes."

"Won't you come in, sir?"

[&]quot;No, no, it is not at all necessary."

"My kitchen is at your service, sir. Maybe it's tidier than Patty's room now Mrs. Urske is gone," said an old woman who lived at the back, and who had come out on hearing the master's voice.

"Thank you, Mrs. Green."

Max Schippheim had almost a royal capacity for remembering the names and faces of all his people. "Thank you. I just want to speak to Patty Urske for a minute," and he led the way to the back kitchen.

"Now, then, Patty, what does it all mean?" he asked, the door being closed. "You seem so miserable and strange that I suppose there has been no exaggeration?"

Patty looked sheepish; it was rather difficult for her to have to explain exactly what had happened to him, but she said—

"There ain't been any exaggeration, I think; leastwise, ...

it don't seem possible."

"Then you have been creating a disturbance in the Long Room,' and quarreling with all the other women, although you know I particularly object to the sort of thing. Patty, I had believed better things of you."

"Me—me make a disturbance! so that's what they say —harpies! Don't believe 'em, please, sir; I only defended

myself while they set on me."

"And why did they set on you?"
Patty colored up and stammered—

"Tain't easy to say, sir; because—because—they hate

me, I suppose."

"Nonsense, Patty, there must have been some direct cause for the commencement of this affray; what was it?"

"It was along of Mounseer," said Patty, looking down.
"They said as he was making up to me, and it ain't a bit true, for I hate him."

Max Schippheim's eyebrows, which were very heavy and

shaggy, lowered perceptibly.

"This is the second time within a few days that your name has been mixed with M. Brumeau's in a disreputable occurrence.

"It isn't my fault, sir, indeed it isn't. I hate him—should never like to see him again. I've never spoken to him but twice, the other night at the gate when I asked him to let me pass, and this morning in the 'Long Room,'

when he whispered something as he'd no right to whisper in my ear as he passed."

"What was it?"

"Please, sir, I'd rather not say, but if it wasn't a bad act, I'd like to kill this foreign Mounseer, and wish, with all my heart, that either he or I was out of Arundale."

"I am sorry, very sorry, to hear all this, child. I had

hoped that you would be very happy at Arundale." So I might, sir, if folks would let me alone."

"Yes. I am the more sorry," he went on, "because a telegram I received this morning compels me to start for Germany this very night. It is not probable that I shall be absent more than ten days, or a fortnight at the outside; still, it is just at a moment when I am afraid my absence will not improve matters for you, my poor Patty."

"I'll try to get along as best I can, sir, but I'm very

sorry you're going."

"I haven't forgotten your welfare altogether in the hurry of my projected departure, and I hope I have secured for you a powerful ally."

"Not Lady Muriel; don't say as it's Lady Muriel."

"Why not Lady Muriel?"

"'Cause that's part of my trouble; she was here this morning, and wants me to go and live at Marks's, and I don't want to."

"No, no. You are better here in your own place. The ally I have secured for you is not Lady Muriel, but Miss Yorke, who has taken a great fancy to you and has promised to call and look after you very often. You can tell all your troubles to her quietly, nay, more easily than you may to me. Now, good-by, my child. Let me hear of no more 'Long Room' quarrels when I come back. I shall make a point of telling Andrews before I go that if there is more of it everyone engaged in the disturbance is to be dismissed from the works, and I am sure Mr. Alston will indoze my opinion."

"I won't speak one word whatever they say," answered Patty, letting her hand linger in the master's, for he had

taken it while he was speaking.

"There's a dear, good girl. Good-by. I'll bring you something pretty from Munich if I hear a favorable account of you."

"Taint bribes as will make me good to you, sir. Don't

bring anything, if you please."

He looked a little astonished, but he made no reply, and went into the passage, He turned back, however, for a second, and said, putting his head once more into the room-

"Elsie Bligh is a gentle child, who seems kindly disposed to you; make a friend of her. Good-by, Patty."

"God bless you, master."

CHAPTER IX.

BRITON AND GAUL.

MR. SCHIPPHEIM had gone to Germany at only a few hours' notice; everyone in Arundale seemed to know it, except Lady Muriel; even Bertha had been told and asked to look after Patty during his absence. Lady Muriel was very angry.

"He had even lunched there on the best terms a few hours before he intended to start, and had not told her. What could it mean? Yes, there was some one else he had not told-Christian; but that was nothing-he never

told Christian anything."
Such being the state of her ladyship's feelings, her irritation against Patty was by no means mitigated, and if she had not been a little bit afraid of Mr. Schippheim she would have desired Bertha to have nothing whatever to do with the girl; probably in refraining from taking this measure she was fully aware that Bertha's patronage without her assistance was scarcely as powerful as Mr. Schippheim hoped, especially as Lady Muriel, not having been asked to do otherwise, thought herself quite justified in making very slighting remarks about Patty whenever the opportunity offered. So much so that Mr. Alston, who not being a clever man himself, saw most things through his wife's spectacles, was inclined to think her a ne'er-do-weel of a girl, and most seriously to blame her for the many disturbances which took place in Arundale; for disturbances followed each other thickly and quickly after Mr. Schippheim left. Never had business in Germany called him away at a more inauspicious moment. The women continued their rankle against Patty and made spiteful remarks at her, which with all her self-control it was very difficult to swallow without retort, especially as she only seemed to have two friends in all Arundale, Joe Marks and Elsie Bligh. And Joe, she thought, was not altogether a very satisfactory friend, since she could in nowise give him the love for which he was ever craving, and it scarcely seemed a fair thing, decided just little Patty, to be always letting this young fellow fight her battles for her, and get a good many hard blows, without being able to give him one crumb of real, true, honest love in return.

For Joe, about this period, did get a good many hard blows, and showed an amount of manliness in the way he parried them which stamped him a real plucky fellow.

Nearly all the other hands in the factory were down on him, especially his friend, Dick Swift, for taking up the cudgels for, and sticking to a good-for-nothing girl like Patty, who did not care a button whether he lived or died, but he went straight on his own way; he had determined to befriend her, and whatever people said, he meant to do it.

Each day the war waged hotter, the fact being that for a long while, a seemingly monotonous calm had reigned in Arundale, but it was only in mere seeming that it had existed; ill will and ill feeling had been smoldering underneath; it wanted but a match to set the poisonous

weeds into a flame—that match was Patty.

Had Mr. Schippheim been at home he would have dismissed the whole of the workers without delay, being a man of enormous mental energy, who always considered that the quickest way to remedy an evil was to strike at once at the very root. But Mr. Alston, notwithstanding all his talk about big schemes, enlarging the business, et cetera, et cetera, was very sluggish in action. He dreaded the trouble wrangling with the old hands and engaging a new staff would entail. So he put it off from day to day, contenting himself with hurling a few oaths at powerless Andrews and recommending him, as he valued his situation, to keep the people quiet.

If Mr. Alston had only sent Paul Brumeau away it would probably have settled matters—at all events, for a

time; but then Paul Brumeau was Lady Muriel's protégé, and what would Lady Muriel say? Peace at home was, he deemed, more valuable than peace in the factory.

Such was the state of affairs when Max Schippheim having been gone a week, there seemed no chance of his returning for at least another fortnight, so he wrote to his partner. Patty looked so utterly and hopelessly wretched that it was pitiable to behold her, and she would most certainly have run away had she not promised the master that she would brave annoyance and endure patiently, if

possible, till his return.

Bertha had been to see her twice, but what could she do, save bestow a few kind words, while Joe was so tormented by the sight of Patty, who, having lost all her fun and bright spirits, was losing her good looks into the bargain, that he was positively beside himself. He watched her about with a sort of dogged fidelity. He could not believe that a set of women, evil tongued though they might be, could so influence Patty as to change her whole nature.

"There must be summat behind as I don't see," he argued with his logic, and so he set himself to find out

what it was.

As he more than half suspected, it was Paul Brumeau. Without making any positive declaration, the little Frenchman never lost an opportunity of compromising Patty; though, as for Joe, he never took any notice of him at all. He had in no way resented the episode at the cottage door; it seemed as if he intuitively knew that if he wanted thoroughly to punish Joe he must do it through Patty, having, however, at the same time conceived that sort of animal liking for Patty which in debased natures takes the place of love.

Of the full extent of his persecution, or how by innuendoes and manifold small attentions he managed to keep the voice of scandal clamorous on the subject of Patty, Joe was not wholly aware, but he heard quite enough to expend what little patience he had left, and he resolved that even if he should swing for it he would pun-

ish this sneaking little French imp.

At first Joe's animosity was of a somewhat vague and unsettled kind, with little more shape or definite purpose than is the rage of a British fighting dog when he sees a

conceited and lion-clipped French poodle in possession of

the pavement at the other side of the street.

Little by little, and very slowly did the electricity scattered over the extent of Joe's horizon settle into one black and portentous thunder cloud. We all naturally seek relief from trouble and suffering, so this poor fellow turned away from the treatment of his cold and secretly ambitious sweetheart and sought to console himself for the loss of kisses and love-words, of secret trysts and sweet caresses, in the indulgence of quite another order of subjects.

"How vastly prime it 'ud be," he would soliloquize, "to poonch you curly French pate o' his'n," and there was an inward ring in the unuttered words which was

nothing less than voluptuous.

He would imagine himself doing all kinds of things to his enemy, and then amuse himself by thinking which he liked best. Sometimes for a change he would call in knives and pistols to these his brain pictures; but this was solely to avoid monotony, for Joe was too thorough an Englishman ever seriously to contemplate such means of aggression, and his mind always stepped back again off their cold, cruel, polished surface, so like the glance of a traitor, to the more wholesome contemplation of his own brawny arms and naked fists.

But the more he pondered, the more grateful grew these ominous reveries, till they became first a habit, then a passion; and at last quite an opium eater's fascination for his dreams was developed in Joe regarding them. Any disinterested person who had been aware of what was going on within him could have told that about this time it was a mere question of opportunity that these meditations should turn to acts, and acts of only too rough and solid a kind. Needless to say that the genius who reigns over evil thoughts and angry intentions was not slow to furnish that occasion without which nothing ever comes

to anything, and it befell in this wise.

A few weeks before this date, Joe Marks had rendered some trifling service to a comrade, which the obliged one had insisted on commemorating then and there with a quart of strong ale, in spite of Joe's manful efforts to convince him it was quite unnecessary.

Seeing, however, that no excuse would be taken in good part, he had yielded, though sorely against his will, for

not only was Joe no drinker, never, in fact, taking anything beyond his moderate modicum of beer at dinner and supper time, but he felt that in accepting this poor fellow's well meant "hob a nob," it would become incumbent upon him to return the compliment the next time they should meet "in play hours." And be sure his friend, who was of a convivial turn, managed to bring about this meeting on purpose by chance, as quickly as the code of fashion in Arundale,—for where does that chameleon-coated goddess not hold sway?—should give warrant

This second carouse came off, then at about eight o'clock on the Saturday evening after Max Schippheim's departure. Such little courtesies were always easier to pay for on pay day than a few days later, and on this occasion, so open-handed did Joe's friend prove that our workman of abstemious ways might have found it puzzling to get away on any decent terms but for the beneficent arrival of Joe's friend's wife, a virago of powerful dimensions, who carried off her "little sot," as she called him, in triumph to the bosom of his family. No sooner was Joe rid of him than he quitted the public house and made a start home for supper. He was perfectly sober, and yet this pint of strong "stingo," taken by one not used to it and on an empty stomach, made him to a great extent a different man. It fired his passions, and weakened, in some degree at least, his powers of reason and self-control.

It was a fine summer's night, and the moone shone already with unusual brightness, although the sun had but just dipped behind the western hills. There were two roads at Joe's disposal in seeking his abode after quitting the "pub,"-one crowded and short, the other lonesome and a trifle tonger. He took the latter. It was a sort of half-finished highway; at one side flanked by a dead wall, and at the other by ground partly laid out in allotments and partly also in new buildings not yet many feet high. It was one of those roads that at present lead chiefly nowhere, except, indeed, from the factory to the new house of the clerk of the works. Along this way M. Paul invariably wended his way every Saturday night, for it was part of his business to confer with that official once a week at that hour. Whether our friend Joe knew of this custom and took the lonely path with any sinister purpose lurking in his

over-heated brain, who shall say?

Certain it is, however, that the two men came face to face in this deserted spot just as the big clock at the factory tolled forth the half-hour after eight on this particular evening. Joe was going along close to the wall, which was on his left, and so, by the rule of the road, which is the reverse for pedestrians to that which holds good for riders and drivers he should have given the wall to the Frenchman. M. Brumeau evidently expected he would do so, as he never attempted to step aside, but stopped dead short in front of Joe. It is a point upon which all foreigners are somewhat punctilious, and the "Mounseer," as the hands called him, would have considered he degraded himself had he given way. So he said civilly enough:—

"Let me pass, please."
To which Joe answered:—

"You get out of my way, will yer?"

"Why, Joe, you very well know-I do ask it-you shall

take to your right."

"Hold yer jargon," roared Joe. "I'm not going to budge a step for the likes o' you, so get out o' my path or

I'll very soon make yer. D'yer hear?"

The voice and Joe's red face, flushed far more with choler than with drink, together with the whole fury of his aspect, made the Frenchman jump to the conclusion that Joe was in a state of intoxication, and as every one knows how literally hors-de-combat a very slight stage of drunkenness renders one in any kind of a fight, Brumeau drew from this mistake a courage which he was, as a rule, very far from possessing. He carried in his hand a cane of the pliant kind known as rattan. This no doubt added to his misplaced confidence, so he allowed himself the luxury of losing his temper, which it was seen he did not do when Joe on a former occasion thrust his hat so ignominously over his eyes; and muttering a very audible "Sacre Canaille!" he raised his right arm with intent to cut Joe across the countenance with a degree of force which would inevitably have marked the bold fellow for life. But Joe Marks, as we have seen, was not drunk, and proved far too quick for the flippant attack of the Gaul. He caught the cane in his right hand, and letting out with his left at the same moment, the Frenchman found himself the next instant on his back on mother earth. Then, to his no little astonishment, Joe, who remained erect with the trophy of the cane, left him alone, and there it would have been better for him to have lain. Ignorant, however of the law and sanctuary which in every English-speaking land is enjoyed by the soil to protect a fallen foe, and still believing in the inebriety of his opponent, the Frenchman, now blind with rage, responded to Joe's—"Now then get up and come on," by implicit obedience.

The fight could have but one conclusion. Joe, flinging the care behind him, proceeded to decorate the foreigner with two unmistakably British black eyes, and then sending him spinning again—this time right into the middle of the road, upon the flat of his back, he took leave of him

thus:

"And now I 'spects you've had as much as is good for your constituention, but you can have plenty more if you likes. But I think I've taught yer to get out o' my road, theer, and I means it in more ways than one."

And with a guffaw which might have been heard at the Market-place, Joe thrust his hands into his pockets and

went on his way rejoicing.

CHAPTER X.

TREASURE TROVE.

"If the master was only home," Patty is repeating over and over to herself, as the terrible intelligence of Joe's onslaught on the French designer having just reached her, she is writhing in agony over what she fears may happen.

"Whatever will become of Joe! he'll be put in prison, I know he will, Mounseer is that spiteful. Oh, he is a foolish boy, is Joe, and me as doesn't care for him one bit, I wonder if ever I shall get that silly if ever I fell in love with any fellow. There's only one being as I'd go through fire and water for, but of course that ain't love."

"Who is it, Patty?"
The questioner was Bertha Yorke, who had come

into Patty's room unperceived. The door being open, one of the neighbors having just quitted it. Bertha had not even knocked.

"Miss Yorke, at this 'ere blessed hour of the morning! why, it ain't six! I was just waiting for the factory bell

to go."

"Yes, I knew you would be in some trouble, Patty, and I thought I would get up early and run down to see you before you went out."

"Thank you, thank you very kindly, miss. Then you've

heard this bit of bad news about Joe?"

"Who in Arundale has not heard it? I am afraid the consequences will be serious for you both."

"Both! Joe ain't nothing to me, miss, nor Mounseer

neither. Why should I be made to suffer for they?"

"You see, my poor Patty, that you will not get people to believe that, since it was entirely on your account that Joe assaulted M. Brumeau, who, it appears, has been hanging about you lately in a way of which Mr. Joe Marks disapproves."

"Well, that ain't my fault. I haven't encouraged him, and it's very hard on a poor girl like me that I should be made the victim of other people's vagaries,"

and Patty began to cry.

"Don't cry, my dear Patty. You must try and be brave. You have only got yourself to depend on, you know, for the way you get on in life, and I am afraid there are difficuliies before you."

"Oh, I suppose there are difficulties before everyone,

but I seem to get an extra share. I wonder why?"

Bertha looked into the lovely face of the lowly born girl with its drooping eyelashes just wetted with tears and its little inflated shell like nostrils, and she saw her answer there. Every woman was jealous of her beauty, even—and she regretted being compelled to think it—even her ideal, Lady Muriel. She was too wise, however, to enlighten Patty on the subject; she only said, in a quiet, demure way she had—

"It is your cross, my poor child, and you must try and

make the burden as light as you can."

Patty saw from Miss Yorke's manner that some more than usually unpleasant occurrence was hanging over her.

"What is it?" she asked. "They are never going to

send me to prison too!"

"To prison? no. You have not done anything to deserve it, have you?" and Bertha smiled and took her hand.

"Don't believe as I've done anything to deserve half that's happened. I've always tried to be honest and straightforward. What are they going to do with me?"

"Well, I hate being the bearer of ill-tidings, Patty, but I think it is kinder to prepare you. You are to be dismissed from the factory."

Patty's eyes flashed and the color rose to her face.

"It ain't true. They can't do it. The master's away."
"Mr. Alston," put in Bertha, quietly, as though to remind her there was another partner.

"Mr. Alston don't interfere with that department."

"No, not when Mr. Schippheim is at home, but he has full power now and a strong recommendation from Mr. Schippheim to dismiss the whole of the hands if he considers it necessary."

It was true, the master had told her so himself in that last interview she had with him. She remembered it perfectly as Bertha spoke. She thought for a minute or two,

and then she said,—

"And they are going to begin with me?"

"Yes. Since you seem to be the cause of offense, my

cousin thinks it will make least fuss to remove you."

"And that's human justice," cried Patty, speaking very bitterly, "these people have tormented me till I'm nearly mad, and I am to be thrown out of work for their fault. Oh, if Granny had only lived, or if the master was only here!"

At this moment the six o'clock bell at the factory began to ring, but instead of hurrying off as she generally did, Patty took off the old black hat which was already on her head when Miss Yorke came in.

"Are you not going up to the work-room, Patty?"

"What's the use, miss? If I am to be sent away I may as well save them the trouble of telling me so."

"You forget I have only told you this out of kindness, and that if my cousin knew I had interfered with his affairs he would be very angry with me. I should even risk

offending Lady Muriel, whom 1 would not annoy for worlds."

Patty took up her hat once more...

"You're right, miss, and thank you. I have no busi-

ness to drag you into my trouble."

"The sky will get brighter, Patty, never fear. There's never a week in which the sun does not show itself, much less a lifetime."

But Patty shook her head. At that moment it was use-

less to talk to her of sunshine.

"Good morning, Miss Yorke, and thank you. I shall be late."

She turned to go, but the real object of Bertha's visit

had yet to be told.

"Look here, Patty;" and Miss Yorke stopped as though too shy to go on; she made a strong effort, however, to overcome her diffidence. "Look here, I am not rich, for my cousin Herbert keeps all my money, but take these two sovereigns; you may want them."

"Indeed, indeed I won't, thank you all the same, but

I won't have any money I haven't earned."

"As a loan," pleaded Bertha, whom this somewhat turbulent refusal had frightened.

But Patty was positive.

"I'll get along, miss, somehow, and I'll be much obliged if you'll give me an occasional word of advice, seeing you've been educated; you know so much more than I do; but I won't take no money, no not even from the master himself. My Granny always told me that taking money as you hadn't worked for was destruction and perdition to a girl."

"She didn't mean me," said Bertha.

"That I don't know. A rule is a rule, you see—but there, the bell has stopped while we've been talking," and Patty ran off, leaving Bertha not a little discomfited. She had risked Lady Muriel's displeasure and all for noth-

ing, since Patty had disdained her help.

She had been quite correct, however, in the information she had brought, Patty was sent for into Andrews' room, paid her wages till the end of the week, and desired not to show her face inside the factory gates again. Andrews, who had always been exceedingly civil, even kind, to Patty, when he saw that Mr. Schippheim inter-

ested himself in her lonely position, was now almost bru-

tal in the short, summary manner of his dismissal.

Andrews, like many others, ever tendered his homage to the rising sun, but he was too coarse-minded to be able to conceal the fact, as a man of more refined culture would have done. He was just a little surprised, however, at the calm dignity with which Patty accepted his communication without a demurrer, and pocketing the money he gave her, dropped a respectful courtesy and left the room.

Accustomed from his office of overseer to hearing many hard words, Andrews had partly armed himself with brutality in order to withstand them in this instance. He did not know Patty, though even she would probably have been less composed had she not been forwarned by Bertha.

She walked very slowly back from the works to her room in the cottage, revolving many projects for the fut-

ure in her mind as she did so.

The street was nearly deserted at that hour of the morning, most of the inhabitants of Arundale being either in the factory or busy inside their shops. Thus she met with but few interruptions. On nearing home, however, she come across a knot of tiny urchins at play.

"Yon's Patty Urske," said an impudent little minx of nine to a boy about the same age. "She's been turned

out of the works for being a bad girl."

"What has she done?" asked the boy. "Stole?"

"No. Been sweetheartin' with the French Mounseer.

Mother says-"

But what her mother had said this precocious young lady was not permitted to state, for Patty, who was a little nearer than she imagined, gave her such a box on the ears that she was speechless for some seconds before she set up such a protracted howl of pain and temper that the whole street echoed with it. No one, however, took any notice; children's screams in Arundale were of much too common occurrence.

Meantime, Patty had gone into the house and shut the

door.

She did not cry or give way to despondency and despair as she had done a week ago when set on by the women in the "Long Room;" it seemed, on the contrary, as if re-

cent occurrences had dried up the fount of tears and made her hard and old.

The observations of these two children had decided her

future.

"She would not remain in Arundale to be the butt of the whole population, from Lady Murial down to these pauper brats."

She laid the money Andrews had given her on the table. Fourteen shillings; that was her week's pay up to the following Saturday night. She pushed away three shillings for rent, and taking a little box from a shelf, she turned out eight. Nineteen shillings, not even a pound, that was all Patty's earthly possessions except the furniture.

"Of course it must go," she murmured; "it was Granny's, I should like to have kept it, but I can't have no incumbrances if I mean to work my way."

How she was going to work her way she did not altogether know; she would get a situation of some sort, she supposed, as she was quite certain Miss Yorke would say a good word for her. So thinking, and without further delay, being of a practical turn of mind, she began to turn out drawers and pull the place to pieces generally, a thing she had not done since Granny's death, having had neither the time nor the heart; as it was, she frequently left off when she came across some old cap or shawl that brought vividly back an almost forgotten memory, and hiding her face in her hands, turned way with a little shiver.

Alone? alone in the world with no money, and scarcely a friend, it was a sad lot, but Patty was brave and she was resolved to struggle resolutely to the end. So recovering herself speedily, she went on with her rummaging. By twelve o'clock, when the hands came trooping out of the works, Patty had already almost completed her task, and was sitting on the floor in the midst of various heaps of old letters, odds and ends, and wearing apparel. Such a collection would have gained from most people the appellation of "rags," but by Patty it was regarded as property.

She had left off rummaging, and was seated with her elbows on her knees, looking in an abstracted way at some papers she held in her hands. All of a sudden there was a sound as of some one trying to open the room door. Patty thrust the whole handful of papers into her pocket:

evidently she was most anxious they should not be seen; then she called out—

"The door ain't locked, why don't you come in?"

It was Elsie Bligh.

"My poor, dear, darling Patty!"

"Now look here, Elsie, I don't want no pity. Don't think as I should have stayed in that factory long-leastwise, if I'd known what I know now I shouldn't, so don't say a word, only if you've a mind to be my friend, all right—here's my hand, only we won't have no sniveling."

"I don't want to snivel, Patty, only I'm sorry for you, and I don't know whatever you is going to do-if the

master was only here!"

Patty looked at her without answering this time; that was exactly what she had been wishing all day. Elsie went on.

"Since he ain't, what do you think of going to mother's for a bit? She don't live in Arundale, you know. I bides with my aunt. Mother washes for the quality and has a laundry at Daleford about three miles off."

Patty gave no immediate reply, but at last she said—

"That's the most sensible suggestion as you've made this month past, Elsie Bligh. Yes, I'll go to your mother if she'll have me; she is a decent woman. But I'll only go on one condition, that she'll let me work for my bed and board till such time as I can get things righted, and have an independence of my own.

"You with an independence, Patty?"

"Ay, and perhaps it won't be so long as you think afore it comes."

All the Arundale girls were amused by Elsie laughed. Patty's grand airs and ambitious schemes. She thought this independence was only another of the many castles in

the air Patty had been known to build.

But Patty did not heed her derision. She got up from her position on the floor, and without saying one word on the subject of the papers she had hidden away in her pocket, she began to put things straight in her room.

"You can go along home to Daleford to-night, after work, and let me know afore the morning what your

mother says."

"Ay, will I, Patty; and I know she'll say welcome, for she's good-hearted, and she's taken a liking to you." Soon after this Elsie Bligh took her leave, and Patty once more was alone. This time she locked the door, and, spreading the precious papers out on the table, she sat for a while studying them very deeply.

"A hundred pounds in the savings bank as I can claim when Granny dies, and me never to know it, and think she was so poor; and ten sovereigns in an old stocking in

the brown hair box under the bed."

She drew the box out while she soliloquized. Yes, there they were in all their golden sheen. She took them out and hid them away in the bosom of her dress. She would tell no one of her treasure, she decided. She had not much belief in Arundale people, and recent occurrences had robbed her of even that little she once possessed.

"Only the master, he was stanch and true; she would wait till he came back. There might be some trouble about it since Urske was the only name by which she was known in Arundale. Yes. Mrs. Bligh's was the place till such time as the master came back, then she'd see about making a start in life for herself."

CHAPTER XI.

HE LOVES HER.

"BERTHA! good gracious! What brings you out at this

time of the morning?"

"And you, Captain Christian. It is much more surprising to see you. I am in the habit of getting up, but you must acknowledge that you belong to the laggard order."

"The morning was very lovely, and I could not sleep, so I thought I would try what a little fresh air would do for me. I am not sure, Bertha, that I did not see your

white skirts floating gracefully among the foliage."

Yes it was a lovely morning. The sun, which had not long risen, was dancing among the dew-drops, which, as though sparkling with joy in welcome of his return, shone like gems upon the verdant earth. The birds in the many trees which surrounded the house above the Dale were

pouring forth their rejoicing at the return of morn in one glad Hallelujah to nature's God, and the buzzing of the insects, the bright colors of the field flowers, and the soft, sweet, balmy scent which pervaded the atmosphere served to combine melody and coloring in one harmonious whole.

"And all save the spirit of man is divine."

Yet to look at the two young people who had just met on the edge of the hill, they scarcely appeared out of con-

cord with their surroundings.

If Bertha was scarcely beautiful according to the classical laws from which men reckon beauty, still she was very fair, and the spirit of purity had enwrapped her in a sort of mystic sanctity which seemed peculiarly in keeping with the hour and scene, while as for Christian himself, he might carry off the palm for highly chiseled features and god-like proportions in any arena of athletes in Europe; his long blonde beard meanwhile proclaiming him essentially Saxon in type.

But in the man was wanting the very charm of expres-

sion that gave the girl a characteristic sweetness.

They were rather physical than mental attributes that rendered Christian remarkable. Very handsome Bertha thought him now, as he lounged with his back against a tree, talking to her, a darkish-brown knickerbocker suit, with scarlet stockings, and a soft Tyrolese hat, enhancing to no small degree the actual beauty of his manly form. At his feet lay crouching "Wolf," Lady Muriel's dachshund.

Bertha smiled when he alluded to her white skirts, and did not answer him. She was always a little shy with Christian, though pleased when he talked to or took notice of her. Judging from her manner, he would never have guessed what a strong flame of love for him had been ignited, and was burning steadily in that seemingly quiet little heart.

Not receiving any answer, he went on—"You have not told me where you have been wandering so early?"

"Oh, I went down to see Patty Urske."

"To see Patty Urske! one never seems to hear of any one but that girl now. You know she is to be dismissed from the works this morning."

"Yes, I went to tell her so."

"You! and may I ask why?"

"She was especially recommended to my care by your

uncle, before he went abroad."

"How very funny that he should select you for a confidante. Did he tell you to what degree he was in love with her?"

"Oh, Captain Christian!"

And Bertha's face grew crimson.

"Well, every one says that my old relative is in love with this Patty Urske, and a most inconvenient predilection it may prove."

"How so? She is a good little thing; besides, I don't believe a word of it; Mr. Shippheim is not in the least

likely to fall in love with a girl like that."

"One would think not; still, I am afraid it is true, and only imagine if she got all his money, Bertha, what would become of me? Since you always profess a certain amount of regard for me, I am surprised that you should encourage this Patty Urske."

It was the first time that Christian had ever adopted the "you and I" tone in addressing Bertha, and from the blush-rose pink that she had been a moment before

she became crimson as a peony.

"Lady Muriel said I might go," she answered; "besides I don't understand how my going or staying away would influence Mr. Schippheim if he really does care for Patty."

"No one would influence you if you cared for any one,

eh, Bertha?'

She looked up at him suddenly for just one second; his large ardent deep blue eyes gazed into her calm gray ones; then she closed them, as though his gaze frightened her.

"No one would influence me," she said, slowly repeating his words. "I think I should be very steadfast."

"And has the arrow of the tender passion ever yet penetrated that little heart of yours, my sweet Bertha?" he asked in a tone that was half-bantering, half-inquiring.

Again she looked up at him for a second.

By what right, she thought, did he ask that question unless it were followed by another? and Lady Muriel had told her she must not expect Christian to express himself words for some time to come. Bertha was very young,

and unversed in the ways of society; still, she often thought that if she loved any man very dearly she could not help telling him so, in the hope of receiving an assurance of his love in return.

Then she would excuse Christian for his silence by telling herself that there was some serious obstacle which he

could not overcome.

Ay, she was right, there was—that is if he really loved her at all; but it never occurred to Bertha that that obstacle was Lady Muriel.

Lady Muriel, her type of goodness and virtue!

She would sooner have believed in the downfall of the entire English Church than that Lady Muriel could have

a grave fault.

At this moment, however, she was not thinking of Lady Muriel, but of Christian, as he asked that almost leading question, which Bertha, all circumstances considered, found it not very easy to answer; so she did what probably most very young girls would have done—she looked a little shy and sheepish, and said she did not know.

Christian laughed and tried to look bright and handsome, telling her once more with his eyes how much he admired her, and then a sort of inward conviction crept over him that Bertha was not wholly indifferent to him, and laying that flattering unction to his soul he felt

pleased.

He is bound hand and foot to Lady Muriel. Has he not loved her for five years, the romance of their young dream having only been interrupted by that very prosaic rich marriage which she had felt it to be her vocation to make. Whether Christian has loved her as much since as before that marriage is perhaps a little doubtful; Lady Muriel thinks he does and rests on his devotion as on a soft mossy bank when the much business she imposes on herself has wearied her.

However that may be, Christian has of late felt a growing inclination to admire Bertha; there is something so sweet, young, and spring-like about her. He is evidently tired somewhat by the garish heat of the summer sun, as it shines fully upon him from Lady Muriel's matured schemes and highly developed undertakings. Had she not just a little outwitted herself when she suggested to this young man that it were a plausible sham to hint

that he was a possible suitor of Miss Bertha Yorke—by this means suggesting to his mind that the possibility might become reality; and each time he had looked at Bertha of late he became more and more impressed with this idea.

Of what Lady Muriel would say he did not, however, dare to think. Athlete though Christian Meyer was in outward appearance, morally he might to a certain extent be written "coward." That is decidedly if being terribly afraid of a scene with a woman, dubs a man a coward.

And that Lady Muriel would make a scene and a very strong scene, too, he did not for a moment doubt. Standing there, however, that August morning, looking at Bertha, as the branches of a wide-spreading elm sheltered them both, he had no thought for Lady Muriel, and if she had come upon them then, probably he would have braved her anger for Bertha's sake, telling her plainly that he had learnt to love her little cousin.

But Lady Muriel was fast asleep; despite all her energy, early rising was not one of her weaknesses, and she knew

nothing of the meeting under the greenwood trees.

Nor was there much to tell, or Bertha would assuredly have repeated it verbatim to her divinity; this fact Christian remembered just in time, when he was about to ask, "Do you know how much I love you, pretty Bertha?" and the words nearly choked him in the desperate effort he made to prevent himself from uttering them, the old saying about being off with the old love before you are on with the new, coming forcibly into his mind the while. Rather like a pair of fools then they both looked, as they stood staring at each other, while neither spoke; but then lovers are wont to look foolish though they do not know it; there is a mute language in the eyes which, to them at least, fills up all the awkwardness of silence.

Bertha, till to-day, had sometimes doubted whether Lady Muriel was not mistaken in imagining that Christian had any especial predilection for her, since very frequently

he seemed almost to ignore her presence.

From to-day, however, she felt she should believe in him. Had he not looked the love which now, more than ever, since his prospects from his uncle were in jeopardy, he dared not speak? She was the first to break the curious silence, almost painful as it was from the intensity of

feeling it produced; less so, perhaps, to the girl than to the man, since the same dread did not oppress her which hung like an incubus over him.

"I must be going up to the house," she said; "it is

getting late, nearly eight o'clock."

"And your feet must be wet from standing in this dew. Bertha, why do you wear such dainty shoes?"

Bertha laughed and looked at her tiny feet almost em-

bedded in the long grass.

"They are used to a few wettings," she said, "I am all right. Are you coming, or going on your solitary way

rejoicing?"

"Going on my solitary way, but not rejoicing." He looked so grave as he answered her that she stared in some astonishment at him for a second; then she turned to take her departure while he raised his hat slowly. It had been an unsatisfactory interview, she could not help thinking as she went along; still for all that she felt quite certain that Christian was in love with her.

If she could have watched him when he believed himself to be quite alone, she would have had no further doubt

on the matter.

"What an ass, what a double-headed ass I have been to let myself in for this intrigue with Lady Muriel. I ought to have cut the Gordian knot when she married, and if I had not been too much under her influence I suppose I should. I'll cut it now, however, I will, by Jove, though what a row, what a frightful row there will be. However, why should I care? She can't show me up without show. ing up herself, and she won't do that. She can make things deuced unpleasant for me, though, especially as my uncle has taken it into his head to strike out a new course of his own. I wonder how much truth there is in that story about his weakness for that little low hussy, and to think of Bertha patronizing her. However, perhaps we may find out something that way. No, I must not break with Muriel yet; she is the only person who can squash Patty, and she must not have her wings clipped till she has done it. But, by Jove, it is difficult to go on shamming a devotion I no longer feel, and she thinks I am shamming the intention of marrying my sweet little Bertha. Shouldn't I like to carry her off this very day and never see any of the d-d Arundale people again,

but it would not be diplomatic. Those who would win must wait."

Into such a résumé as that may the thoughts be concentrated that chased each other through Christian's brain after Bertha had left him—he, meanwhile, totally disregarding the dew of which he had bade her be careful, had thrown himself full length on the grass, and looked as hopelessly love-sick a swain as the most exacting maiden might desire; though, perhaps, the careful side of his character, which suggested waiting, would scarcely have been deemed a perfection from a feminine aspect.

Nor was Christian exactly pleased with himself for his resolve. He felt that it was cowardly and base; but what could he do with Lady Muriel's determination of purpose and shrew-like tongue in terrorem over him, and his uncle's fortune a little further off than it had seemed even a

week ago.

He would not stop idling here though, he thought, as he suddenly got up and shook himself; he would carry out his oft-talked-of project, and exchange into a regiment on foreign service. How could he continue to make Dale House his home when these two women both dwelt under the same roof? It would be hard not to see poor darling little Bertha for months, perhaps years; but before he left England he would make her promise to be true to him, and then he would go off without a word of explanation with Lady Muriel.

Having settled his plans in this very satisfactory, if not wholly brave fashion, he lounged slowly toward the house, indulging in a continuation of his reverie the while. A

voice from one of the terraces awakened him.

"Good morning, Christian. Is anything the matter that you are out so early? How jaded and ill you do look. Come in and have your breakfast, you poor dear boy."

It was Lady Muriel who spoke, and while she did so, she leant over the balustrade and put her hand in Christian's. Their eyes met, as his and Bertha's had met a couple of hours ago, and Lady Muriel for the first time thought she detected the absence of an accustomed fire in his glance.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PERSUASIVE PINT.

WHEN Christian went into the breakfast-room, he found Bertha seated in her usual place behind the silver tea paraphernalia, and Mr. Alston absent; an unusual occurence since he was generally the most punctual of the party.

"Where is Alston?" he asked, looking round, as though seeking in Herbert Alston a protector from these two women, whom he had learnt during the last hour that it

was rather a terrible matter to face.

"Oh, Herbert went out quite early, before eight. He is really at last impressed with the idea that this sort of mutiny must be stopped in the works. It is a pity he did not interfere earlier, and perhaps poor M. Brumeau would have been spared the pain and annoyance of this last scandal."

Christian began to laugh.

"It won't do him any harm. He fancies himself to such a degree, it will take him down a peg or two; but must he not look lovely with two black eyes. You will be

quite disenchanted, Lady Muriel."

"Oh, Christian, how can you joke like that? An artist of M. Brumeau's caliber to be disfigured and rendered incapable of attending to his painting! It is too dreadful to think of. I hear from my maid that he is quite ill this morning."

"Poor Brumeau! he is indeed to be pitied," but Christian's tone was a bantering one, and Lady Muriel turned

away from him with a toss.

"I mean it; indeed I do, Lady Muriel," he went on, with more gravity. "I pity every man who is a coward, and therefore, by the same reasoning, I must respect the plucky dog who has dared the anger of all Arundale and punched this Frenchman's head because he thought he deserved it."

"Temper, simply temper and brutality-in all proba-

bility he was drunk."

"Joe Marks doesn't drink," observed Bertha very quiet-

ly; she was pleased with Christian for siding with what

she considered the weaker party.

"But he was partially drunk, Bertha; that he had been drinking has been proved. In the whole annals of Arundale a brawl has never been recorded that was not the result of drink."

"And what has Alston decided to do? telegraph to my uncle or act on his own responsibility? He seemed unde-

cided last night."

"Telegraphing to your uncle would be folly, as I have made him see at last. It is such a good opportunity, too, to get rid of that little good-for-nothing Patty Urske. Then, of course, Joe will be dismissed. He could not be kept in the factory after what has happened."

"What a charming pair of martyrs! I should think all Arundale would subscribe to put up statues to them," said Christian; as he helped himself to a poached egg from

a dish in front of him.

"Really, Christian, you are too odious this morning. Pray what sort of treatment would you recommend? Would you like us to pet and spoil Joe Marks and this girl in order to make an Arundale martyr of M. Brumeau?"

"No, not exactly. I should leave them all alone to fight out their quarrels as best they can. Brumeau has been hankering after Joe Marks' sweetheart, or he would not have hit him on the head, and what right has Brumeau to hanker after Joe Marks' sweetheart?"

"Peace must be kept, and the liberty of the British subject respected. M. Brumeau has as much right to

make love to this girl as Joe Marks has."

"Exactly, therefore let them settle it. It seems to me that it is rather derogatory to the dignity of Lady Muriel Alston to mix herself up in these quarrels."

"Lady Muriel Alston never considers it derogatory to her dignity to show that she is the mother of her peo-

ple."

Christian merely bowed his head in acknowledgment of this somewhat dignified assertion; but Bertha, who happened to be looking at him that moment, noticed a curl about his lower lip which almost amounted to a smile. She was inclined to resent it forthwith; even from Christian she could not brook any slight cast on her divinity.

Breakfast at Dale House that morning was not a very

long meal. Lady Muriel was far too practical to be inclined to dawdle, and very soon went off to attend to the multifarious engagements she either had, or imagined she had to keep, telling Christian as she left the room, that by twelve o'clock she would be free, and hoped he would come in the shade for an hour before luncheon and read to her while she worked.

This was an arrangement of almost daily occurrence at Dale House, and one from which Bertha was always excluded, on the plea that it was not good for girls to read

novels.

Christian answered that he would be in readiness and delighted, and meantime, would saunter down into Arundale and see what had been the outcome of the filtering the factory was to receive from Mr. Alston that morning. The result of Christian's walk was that Lady Muriel wait. ed in vain for him when the twelve o'clock reading time came; for, at that hour the "hands" flocked out of the works, and a general row seemed to be imminent. The people were standing about in groups, talking and vociferating violently; the whole place seemed suddenly to be split into two factions, the larger portion, as Christian had prophesied, declaring for Joe Marks, who, from being a civil-spoken, well-conducted lad, was a tolerably general favorite in Arundale, while Paul Brumeau, as a foreigner and a novelty, was more or less looked on in the light of an interloper. A certain set of men, however, took it into their heads that for the very reason that he was a stranger it was damaging to the honor of Arundale that he should be knocked about by this big-fisted Joe.

"It wasn't a fair fight," they said, "nor one of which

an honest Englishman ought to be proud."

They expressed themselves very freely on the subject, in language neither polite nor parliamentary, to have it all thrown back to them with equal virulence and violence by the party who declared that "Joe was quite right, and they didn't want no d——d furrineers comin' a poachin' on their manor."

From mere hot words several of these knots of talkers got to blows, and that a few others besides Paul Brumeau would have black eyes in Arundale there was little doubt.

Andrews came fussing out of the office, and tried blustering and persuasion by turns, but no one paid the slightest attention to him. It seemed as if the whole factory had lost that regard for superior officers for which it had ever been celebrated under Mr. Schippheim's management.

Andrews, foiled, retired in searched of Mr. Alston, but that gentleman, who was looking out of the comfortable upper room assigned to him at the works, did not evince any particular alacrity to plunge into the midst of the free fight which by this time was going on in the quadrangle.

Mr. Schippheim's "Now, my lads, what does all this mean?" would have stopped the disturbance at once, but Mr. Alston was quite right in doubting his possession of the same amount of power over the people that his senior

partner enjoyed.

He scratched his head, flushed up, and looked perplexed at Andrews; then he began to talk vaguely about a difficult position to deal with single-handed, and that perhaps

it would be better to call in the aid of the police.

Of course all this fighting and skirmishing and hard words was a case for the police; but Mr. Alston ought to have known his people better and been fully aware that extraneous assistance was more likely to infuriate than to subdue them. Andrews, at all events, did not budge when he talked of the police, but answered a little hesitatingly, as if half afraid of offending Mr. Alston, with whom he was by no means on the same cordial terms as with Mr. Shippheim—

"I think, sir, if you wouldn't mind speaking to them

yourself---'

"I—I speak to them, Andrews! I don't know what to say; if they won't attend to you, they won't to me. Besides, in a row like that it would be impossible to make oneself heard. God bless my soul, there's a stone against the window! It is as bad as being in Ireland or Russia—Communists all—every one of them."

Andrews smiled.

"I think, sir, it is only an English row, which a few straightforward words from the right person would stop at once."

Ay, but the right person is not there, and that, perhaps, Mr. Alston felt as well as Andrews did.

"Good gracious, who is that down there among the

men?" cried Mr. Alston on a sudden, taking a peep out of the window from behind a curtain. "Why, it is Christian; he will be killed—killed, as sure as fate. What temerity!"

"Captain Christian! I didn't think of him," said Andrews, walking right up to the window and opening it wide, in spite of Mr. Alston's half-protest that it was dan-

gerous.

He wanted to hear whether Captain Christain would

have any authority over these unruly men.

Yes, in spite of his indolence and usual lardi-dardi airs, he was his uncle's nephew, flesh of his flesh, spirit of his spirit.

He got up on an old tub which was standing bottom upward in the corner of the courtyard, and began a

harangue.

"Look here, my boys, don't you know that the game you are carrying on is arrant tom-foolery? Losing your tempers and bruising your backs for what? Because two men are in love with one woman. You are not all in love with her, I suppose. If so, God help you! And since you don't care a fig about the matter, just go home to your dinners and leave the parties interested to settle the matter amongst themselves. If you'll stop this row and let us have no more of it, I'll stand you a pint of ale all round."

"Hurrah for Captain Christian! three cheers for Cap-

tain Christian! Schippheim for ever!"

While Herbert Alston had been shivering by the window, Christian had turned the current by a few hearty, though scarcely rhetorical words. No doubt the promise of ale was bribery and corruption in which neither of the partners would have joined; but then Christian was not a partner, and was therefore free to act as he listed.

At all events he had succeeded in stopping at the very outset what might otherwise have proved a very compli-

cated and troublesome disturbance.

His next endeavor was to get away from these men, who suddenly turned from hating each other into worshiping him to such an extent that they wanted to carry him in triumph through the yard. This he would, however, in no wise permit, and calling to Andrews, who was still at the window shielding Mr. Alston from view, he

bade him tell Rogers at the bar belonging to the works to give them a pint of ale all round, and send the score to him.

This produced another succession of loud cheers, during which Christian managed to slip through a side door which led into the building, and from whence, by going down some long passages, he could get out at the back of the workshops—back to Dale House to read sentiment and romance to Lady Muriel.

But Christian's adventures for that day were not yet over. Standing all alone at the workshop door was Joe.

He had been dismissed, and was so crushed and taken aback by the verdict that he had only managed to crawl just outside the back door, and there he had remained in a state of stupefaction ever since. No one had interferred with him, because that mode of exit was not very frequently used, and Christian was the first person who had happened to come by.

"Hullo! Joe! why what the devil! You look as glum,

man, as if——"

"Please, sir, you know I've been dismissed."

"Well—yes—I must say I think you richly deserve it. What the deuce you wanted to set all Arundale by the ears for I can't make out. What are you going to do next?"

"I'm sure I don't know. There's my mother, she's a most dependent on me, and as for Patty, I don't know what she will think."

"You should have considered all this before, my man."

"It was the drink as done it," said Joe, meekly. "Drink! I did not know that you ever drank."

"Not as a rule, sir, but I did have a drop too much on

Saturday night."

"Well, you've got yourself into a precious mess. I suppose you know M. Brumeau can have you taken up if he likes, and in all probability you'll get a couple of month's for assault."

Joe hung his head, and did not attempt to answer.

"If you ask me my opinion, I think he very probably will," went on Christian; "just now he is too ill and battered about, but only wait till he's a bit better."

"What do you think I had better do, sir? I'll apologize

if you wish it, but I'd rather not."

"Apologize! no, stick to your colors."

Joe's eyes twinkled.

"Of course, you thought this man was in the wrong, or you wouldn't have punished him. By law you had no right to interfere, but having interfered, stick to it, only make yourself scarce for a while."

"Won't that look like running away, sir?"

"No, I think not. For peace-sake you are bound to do it. Your staying here will aggravate both Brumeau and the hands; whenever they see you there will be a fresh row. Go over to Belton, the town about twenty miles off, and try to get some work there. The 602d Regiment is quartered at Belton. I'll write a note to Captain Kendall, a friend of mine, and tell him all about you. I daresay he'll help you in some way."

"Thank you, sir, thank you very kindly. I'll follow

your advice."

"You had better go at once. There has already been a row in the yard about this business. Do you want any money?"

"No, sir, thank you. I have a pound or two in re-

serve, and if I get work soon I shall do."

"All right. Let me know if you get hard up. Cap-

tain Kendall at the barracks. I'll write to-day."

Joe Marks had risen by many degrees in Christian's estimation by refusing his offer of pecuniary assistance.

As soon as he was once more alone, Joe strode off home and ate his dinner in almost silence. He did not tell his mother he had been dismissed from the works, and being a prudent woman, she asked no question since from the rumors flying about the town, she had more than a vague knowledge of what had passed between him and the new designer. Nor was Joe, considering her fondness for him, treating his mother altogether fairly by not confiding in her, for certain it is that having finished his dinner, he slipped the little hoard of savings he possessed into his pocket, and started for Belton without vouchsafing a single word to anyone.

CHAPTER XIII.

BLIND.

PATTY in a neat black print frock, and an apron as clean as the driven snow, is standing at the door of Mrs.

Bligh's laundry.

Matters have been arranged to her satisfaction, and though she is treated more like a daughter than a servant, she works for her bread and cheese, as do the rest, and according to Mrs. Bligh more than earns it too, for a handier, more willing girl than Patty she has not had in her employment for many a long day. Yet Patty is not happy; her heart is in Arundale, and she always seems to be hankering after the old place—not that she will ever go back there, she supposes; having once drifted away, the natural inference is that she will drift on. Patty, though an ignorant girl, knowing nothing of currents and rivers, and geographical terms, yet has a sort of instinctive feeling that a thing having once passed away can never return in exactly the same form.

The old days of Arundale will no more recommence for her than she will become a baby again to be nursed and fondled on her mother's knee; of that she feels very sure. Who or what she longs for in Arundale she does not even try to define to herself, but the old life is gone, the life about which she used to complain to poor old Granny, but since which she has endured enough to discover was very careless and sweet. There is no one about her now, kindly though the faces are of those around, who belongs to that happy past, not even Joe. Where can he be? Patty has always professed not to love Joe, but it is of Joe she is thinking, as she stands by the laundry door that mellow September afternoon, now three weeks since she left

the Arundale works.

Since then she has received no tidings of him. Mrs. Marks, in her dire trouble of mind, has been over to Daleford two or three times to talk to Patty about him, but neither of them has the slightest idea what has become of him. No one knows but Captain Christian, and he is the last person to whom they would have thought

of turning for information. Since Patty and Joe have left, peace has been re-established in the works, where Brumeau, under Lady Muriel's patronage, reigns supreme, and Patty, hearing this, remains quietly at Daleford. She will not go over 'to Arundale to stir upold memories and annoy herself, she thinks, but wait for the next issue; and save an occasional visit from Mrs. Marks or Elsie Bligh she has not seen any Arundale people since she left.

Now as she is standing by the door, half hoping that being Saturday Elsie will come and warm her heart a little with some Arundale talk, she sees Miss Yorke walking along a path which winds down from the house round by Father Fenwicke's mill. She had almost forgotten Miss Yorke during the last week or two, but now she wonders how it is she has never seen that young lady since the morning of her dismissal from the works, and she is not at all sorry that she is coming now.

"Good afternoon, miss. So you have found me out in

my new quarters," she says, as Bertha approaches.

"Yes, Patty, and I am glad you seem to have such comfortable ones. I should have been before, only—"

"You was set against me, miss, and told as I was a bad

"No, not exactly that," answered Bertha. How could she tell Patty that it was all on account of the master's favor that this persecution of her had arisen, and that she had been forbidden by Lady Muriel to pay the visit she

would have liked to Patty?

Forbidden, forsooth! because it was against her own interest, she was told, to encourage this girl, who Lady Muriel declared was angling for Max Schippheim's money. Bertha herself was very straightforward and right-minded, and in her heart did not altogether believe this of Patty, yet having had it instilled into her not only by Lady Muriel, whom she worshiped, but by Christian, whom she loved, how could she do otherwise than waver in the faith she had been very much inclined to attach to Patty in the first instance. Hence her silence and long absence. Why, then, had she walked over to Daleford to-day. Lady Muriel, for some reason of her own, which she did not choose to confide to Bertha, had sent her.

"It was as well to see the girl occasionally, and find

out what was going on," she said. This might or might not be all her reason for starting Bertha off to Mrs. Bligh's laundry. Of course Bertha thought it was, but then she was apt to be very trustful where Lady Muriel was concerned.

The feeling, however, that she was acting the part of a spy on Patty, robbed the visit of all its charm—Patty, whom, if left to her own impulses, she would have regarded almost in the light of a humble sister, so much was she impressed by her beauty and honest, simple manners.

While she stood there looking rather like a culprit Patty went indoors and brought a chair from the ironing room.

"If she wasn't set against me I wonder whatever it was as kept her away," she thought to herself meanwhile.

Patty, be it remembered, was a little inclined to do homage to the grand folk at the House, and it would have pleased her ambitious little heart to have Miss Yorke for a real friend. Patty felt she should have liked her ever so much better than Elise Bligh; somehow she was not in the least shy with those above her in rank, as so many humbly born girls would have been.

"You're looking a bit fagged and pale, miss; I hope you haven't been ill," said Patty, when she brought the chair.

"No, not exactly ill, but rather worried."

"Worried! good gracious, whatever has a young lady like you to worry about? now if it was me."

"Oh, I daresay you have not more cares than I have-

we all have our troubles in every class. Heigho!"

It was very evident that Bertha fancied herself very much in love, and girl-like was half inclined to confide in Patty, especially when she said very respectfully—

"If it's any trouble as I can in any way help you in, miss, I'll be most happy. You've been real good to me—not turned me adrift when other folk were against me."

Bertha felt a little qualm of conscience, but she answer-

ed pluckily—

"I wish to be true to you, Patty, it will be your own fault if I am not. I wonder if you will ever come between me and what I love most on earth."

"Who, I? Good gracious, Miss Yorke, that would be quite impossible."

"Not so impossible as you think, perhaps."

"If I only knew how I could injure you, I'd do everything I could to prevent it."

"I don't think you would, Patty, at all events not if

you feel as I do."

"Well, this beats all the riddles I ever heard. Whatever you mean, miss, I can't think."

"No, I daresay not, but perhaps you will know some

day."

"What you love most on earth sounds like a sweetheart," muttered Patty, half to herself, "yet I can't see that a poor girl like me can have aught to do with your sweethearting." Then a light seemed to break on Patty. "Tain't the French Mounseer, is it? 'Cause I don't like him one bit, though he did come dangling after me when I was in Arundale."

"No," answered Bertha, compelled to laugh at the bare idea. "I never exchange a single word that I can help with M. Paul Arumeau."

"That's right, for he ain't much account either in looks or conduct, is he, miss? But whoever it can be I can't

think, and me to have anything to do with it too."

"Well, never mind, Patty. I daresay it is all imagination. Tell me about yourself. How are you getting on here? Are you going to stop? Get another chair, and let us have a chat."

Patty did as she was bid, pleased that Mrs. Bligh and the household generally should see her in intimate confabulation with the young lady from the big house, and for a good half hour the two girls talked away quite at their ease, for Bertha referred no more to the puzzling subject with which she had begun the interview, and though it never wholly left Patty's thoughts, yet she was too much interested in talking to Miss Yorke to let them dwell on it very resolutely.

At last Bertha got up.

"I must be off," she said. "Lady Muriel always likes me to be there at five o'clock tea, in case visitors should call. You may as well walk with me round past the mill."

"Are you very fond of Lady Muriel?" asked Patty, as

they got up.

"Devoted to her. If you knew how great and noble and good she is you would be devoted to her too. She passes all her time in doing what she can to help other people."

"I suppose she is very fond of you?"

"I think so. She is more like an elder sister than a cousin. Oh, if I could only fill my position in life as worthily as Lady Muriel does, I should be quite content."

"When you are married, Miss Yorke, you'll be a kind mistress and a benevolent friend to those that depend on

you. I hope I shall be one of them."

"You!" and Bertha uttered a little cry, which she tried to turn off with a laugh, by saying: "Fancy your ever being dependent on me, though if my dream should ever be realized it may be so. Good-by, Patty. I'll come

and see you again some day."

She was gone without further words, leaving Patty standing there with wide open eyes and a stare of utter bewilderment on her pretty face. "Captain Christian!" she exclaimed as soon as she had watched Bertha out of sight, "he is the man, there ain't a doubt about it. Poor Miss Bertha! well, I'm as sorry for her as if she was my twin sister, though whatever she can think I have to do with him, I don't know! and she so devoted to Lady Muriel, too. Well, some folks is blind."

And Patty sat down on a large stone to think the matter out after her own crude, honest fashion. If Lady Muriel imagined that her flirtation with the senior partner's nephew was unknown to the people of Arundale she was evidently quite mistaken, since Patty saw at once that the existence of Lady Muriel would be a serious obstacle to Bertha's happiness. Patty had become wiser on many subjects since the day she first saw Christian in the Dale

House carriage.

For a very long time Patty sat on the stone thinking. She had naturally a clear brain, but it was scarcely developed as yet; only educated after the fashion of Board Schools; hearing nothing but the petty quarrels and grumbles of the Arundale workers she had scarcely had much chance. This labyrinth of circumstances then, into

which she seemed since her grandmother's death to have been thrust, was almost more than she could see her way through. She, however, fully comprehended that she was destined to play a different part in life from that which she now filled, and she was determined to show, if possible, that she could be both capable and honest. It would be a severe trial, that struggle which Patty would have to make from the darkness of ignorance into the light of knowledge; but latent within her, though she could not gauge them herself, there were the necessary qualifications—natural tact, honesty, perseverance and ambition.

What abler attributes to be found wherewith to mold a noble character? For the present, images of all the people with whom her lot in life seemed more or less remotely to have been cast, seemed mixed up in a sort of jumble in her brain. The only panel that stood out in relief among these brain pictures was that on which was painted life size Max Schippheim, the senior partner. The others might all be true or false, she searcely knew which they were, but about him she had no doubt; he was noble and straightforward and true, and she felt cer-

tain he would always be her friend.

It was a month since he had gone away; she had heard nothing of or from him, but she did not believe in him any the less for that reason; though as she sat trying to puzzle out the future as it had become more involved by Bertha's hints about Captain Christian, she wished with all her heart that the master would come back and let her look with his long sighted eyes on to some of the distant ranges. "It is no good. I can't make it out at all. I never even spoke to Captain Christian, though I suppose it's because of him Lady Muriel hates me," she said, at last, jumping up as she raised her head from her bended knees, and saw the sun already setting behind the western hills. "Mrs. Bligh's tea will be over this long while. Mercy, what a time I've been sitting here idle." She was just starting to run off at a brisk pace when she stopped suddenly and uttered a cry of joy.

Max Schippheim was coming over a little footbridge

which lay across the mill-stream.

CHAPTER XIV.

"ANY ONE BUT YOU."

BERTHA sped very swiftly along the narrow pathway after she left Patty, partly because she feared she was late, partly because she was carried away by her feelings.

All the good and the true in Bertha's warm-hearted nature had been awakened during her recent interview with Patty. Overflowing as she was with spontaneous affection, happy in the recently attained knowledge of Christian's love for her, she could scarcely believe in the existence of evil in any one, much less in Patty, who had unwittingly imbued her with a deep sense of the poor factory girl's candor and honesty. Up the hill to the House she almost flew, caroling meanwhile softly to herself like a young bird, of which she perforce reminded one, into the copse where she had met Christian on that never-to-be-forgotten morning. In that sacred grove she would fain have lingered for awhile and dedicated a few minutes to the memory of that hour, but time would not allow of loitering she fancied, so she still ran on in the deepening twilight, without giving due heed to her bounding steps. Suddenly she caught her feet in a fallen sapling which lay across her pathway, and fell prone with a cry of pain.

For a moment or two she lay there quite motionless, then overcoming a feeling of faintness by the sheer effort of her will she made a vigorous attempt to get up. It was, however, fruitless; the agony she experienced in the instep of her left foot was so intense that she could do nothing but roll over on her side, and remain tranquilly there with a bough of a prostrate tree for a pillow, till, as she hoped, the first anguish would pass and she might be

able to pursue her way.

For nearly a quarter of an hour she remained there, her sensations, as it were, blunted, half-unconscious in pain-exhaustion, a sort of vague wonder as to how she was to get home flitting across her mind every now and again, to be succeeded by a lassitude she could not overcome.

"Am I to remain here, perhaps all night? Will no

one find me?" she murmured, though still, mercifully, the exhaustion she experienced was too complete for her to feel any great terror. Besides, was not even now help at hand? There was a sound of voices, and Bertha was just going to cry out for assistance when something in the tone of the speaker arrested her attention, and faint, pain stricken though she was, she raised herself into a sitting posture, and strained every nerve to listen.

It was Lady Muriel's voice.

"Oh, Christian, you cannot mean that you really in-

tend to go away—away for months, perhaps years."

Christian going away! No, it was not possible, and spell-bound as by a strong fascination, Bertha did not attempt to stir or cry out, but listened on, each word Christian uttered burning into her heart like a brand of fire.

"I do not see that there is any other course open to me," he said. "I have led this life of duplicity long enough; both for your sake and mine, Muriel, it is right

that it should end."

"How selfish you are!" she cried. "You are only thinking of yourself in this matter. You will go abroad in another regiment, you say, and very soon, I suppose, be taken up with some other love; in fact, you may have one by this time for anything I know; while I—oh, Christian, I cannot think how you can leave me here a victim to Herbert Alston's platitudes."

"You married him; you did not think of me then," he

answered, bitterly.

"For money, yes. I only did as many another poor girl of a noble race has done before me. I married him as much for the sake of my family as my own; but I always loved you the best. However, it is useless to recapitulate all this again; we have discussed it so often."

"Too often, yes. When you married Herbert Alston,

Lady Muriel, we ought to have parted for ever."

"My dearest Christian, what has happened; who has said anything? why are you taken with this conscientious qualm? I am sure Herbert is perfectly contented; to possess the bare name of Lady Muriel is quite enough for him."

"It may be so. I have no wish to analyze Herbert's feelings. All I say is, this state of things cannot go on

for ever. For a man acting the part I have been doing of late, it seems laughable to talk of honor. Still I have a shred or two remaining, and they——"

But Lady Muriel would not let him finish.

"It is absolutely absurd to talk in this fashion," she cried; "if you had one spark of the old love for me remaining you would never think of leaving me. You could not, Christian, if you cared for me even one half as much as I do for you"—and the last portion of Lady Muriel's sentence was almost indistinct from choking tears. They did not seem to touch Christian, however. Strange how quickly love can be turned anigh to hate in a man's heart when the image of some other woman intervenes! He answered quite sharply.

"I am a moral coward, I know, or I should long since have released myself from the shackles that have been weighing me down with self-upbraiding for the last three

years."

"Tell me, Christian, do you love me now as deeply, as fervently, as you did when these shackles, as you call them,

were first woven about you?"

"The flight of time renders it difficult to gauge love, Muriel. If I had not had a strong, deep love for you I should scarcely have——"

A cry of some one in great pain made them both look round and stand still for a few seconds to listen, but they

saw no one, heard no more.

"Who-what could it have been?"

"Some animal, probably," suggested Lady Muriel.

"No, I think it was a human voice."

"Some child, then, down in the village; they are always shrieking and making a noise."

"Listen, perhaps we shall hear it again."

But all was silence; save the twittering of the birds in the trees, the buzzing of the insects in the bracken, there was not a sound to be heard.

And Lady Muriel and Captain Christian went on their way to the House, where they expected to find Bertha pre-

siding at the five o'clock tea-table.

Whether they pursued the conversation that had been going on in the copse Bertha never knew. As it was, she had heard more than her bewildered brain could stand, and having given utterance to that one bitter

heart-cry, she lost all consciousness of what was going on around.

Six o'clock passed, seven o'clock, and Bertha did not return home. It was already growing dark, and the dressing bell for the half-past seven dinner had rung some time since.

Lady Muriel was growing irritably anxious; she was fond of Bertha, and would deeply have regretted any mishap that might have occurred to her, nor was she in any very patient humor, her late conversation with Christian considered; only impatient, however, not unhappy. She had too great a credence in her own powers to think for a moment she would not eventually make Christian do as she wished; of course, she never associated Bertha in any degree with the matter, or she would not, talking to Christian, who was writing in the study, have said—

"Do you know Bertha had not come back from Daleford yet, where she went to see Patty Urske? I wish I had not let her go. She must have fallen in with some of the workers, and being alone may have had a fit of

nervousness, and taken refuge somewhere."

"Bertha! my God!" and before Lady Muriel could say another word he was out of the house, running down the hill to Daleford by a steeper but shorter path than that

Bertha had taken on her way home.

Had he taken the longer one he would have met her laboring along through the copse with halting, stumbling steps and a pallid pain-stricken face, not overcome, however, so much by physical as by mental agony; her sprained foot hurt her as she tried to use it in no limited degree, but what she experienced by this discomfort was as nothing in comparison to what she felt as she thought of the revelation that had recently burst so unexpectedly upon her.

When the gathering dews of evening, by refreshing, had aroused her from her faintness that had come over her after uttering that cry, her first idea was that she had been experiencing a horrible night-marish dream; then, thoroughly collecting her scattered senses—

"It is too true," she exclaimed, "all, all too true!"

Lady Muriel, her divinity, her goddess, unveiled and found of clay, the very pedestal on which she had placed her thrown down and shattered in the dust.

It was a rude and ruthless annihilation of the worship of her life—a bitter disappointment from which, never, during all the future years she might have to pass, would she recover.

Had a man been false to her she would probably have

taken it less to heart in a certain sense.

But this woman, this idol, this saint-like, perfect Lady Muriel, that she should be a defaulter in honor, rectitude, even perhaps in virtue, was more, far more than Bertha could grasp, without her mind becoming well-nigh unhinged at the bare thought thereof.

It seemed as if her faith in everything pure and noble had been torn from her all at once. If Lady Muriel were

false, who, then, was true?

This wife, this mother, in love with Christian—her Christian, her lover! The thought was too horrible; and then the equivocations, the lies about his intended marriage with herself crowded on her, seeming to dance about her reeling brain like grinning furies. Oh, she would go mad, she knew she would—there, all alone in that drear, ghostly wood, for the long shadows rising about her on all sides, helped to fan her imagination into a fact. If she died in the effort she must get home.

Home! and she shivered from head to foot as the thought of home brought back the image of the presiding

deity of that home.

But bodily weakness prevailed, and, much as she dreaded meeting Lady Muriel, she felt she must go back and obtain at least shelter and rest for the night. It took her a long time to reach the house. More than once, well-nigh vanquished, she sank down half fainting by the way; then, summoning fresh courage, she again proceeded for awhile.

When she did arrive it was quite dark. Christian had not returned from his vain search for her, and Herbert Alston, growing alarmed, had followed him down into the village. Lady Muriel, even, had put a wrap over her head and was wandering about in front of the house, too restless to remain in doors till Bertha was found. It was there that they met in the darkness; but nothing but a long wailing cry burst from the girl's parched lips when Lady Muriel, taking her into her arms, almost carried her into the house, as over and over again she repeated—

"My dearest, my poor, poor, dearest Bertha, how did you manage to hurt yourself? You shall never go out

again by yourself."

She laid her on the drawing-room sofa, sent the butler to fetch the Arundale doctor, the maid to bring restoratives and a hundred necessaries—in fact, was at the same time, loving, affectionate, and practical.

Meanwhile, Bertha did not respond; she lay there like a log, and let every one do exactly what pleased them. She had not addressed one word to Lady Muriel since she

came in.

"If they would only let her die," she thought. "Death

would be preferable to Lady Muriel's presence now."

At last she heard Christian's voice; another instant, and he was in the room, asking Lady Muriel, in an excited way, endless questions about Bertha.

She trembled from head to foot as he spoke.

"How dare he ask about her? How dare Lady Muriel

answer him?"

When the doctor arrived, he advised that she should at once be carried up to bed, and a soothing draught should be administered; then Christian's strong arms were offered.

"I will carry her up so carefully."

"You! Not you—oh, any one but you!" cried Bertha, recoiling from him as though he had been some dangerous wild beast.

"Not Christian? Why, Bertha, dearest, not let Chris-

tian carry you up-stairs?"

It was Lady Muriel who put the question, in her softest

voice.

"Because—because I never wish to see either you or Christian again!" shrieked poor Bertha, driven almost to

frenzy by what she had undergone.

"My darling, terror has bewildered you," Christian whispered, in a tone Lady Muriel could not hear, as he leant over the sofa, and without more ado he took Bertha up in his arms, and carried her out of the room.

The state of the s

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRAMBERLEYS.

"THE parrot, the parrot!" shouts Mrs. Tramberley, gaining the top of the shabby staircase with that family pet and nuisance jabbering the most mal apropos nonsense from a huge cage with bars like the ribs of a skeleton, which this materfamilias hugs in her arms.

The first cab is just starting, for to-day the Tramberleys

move to their new residence.

"No room!" retorts an untidy head, all that is visible of the eldest girl seated in that vehicle, and packed to the ears in bandboxes, furniture, bundles, and countless articles which defy description.

"Plenty of room, mum," contradicts the rough basso of cabby, who is always finding place for something more

on the top.

"'Cos vy," he inwardly chuckles, "hit's tuppence

hextra 'cordin' to lor."

And an interminable trio ensues—recitativo con brio—between him and the two ladies, with parrot obligato. The street, too, this bright August morning—it is close to the Edgware-road—is full of idle boys and other loiterers, to whom noise of any sort is dear and contagious, while the drawing-room first floor front of the dingy two-windowed house presents a scene of the wildest confusion.

Here Mr. Tramberley, who, like his wife, is tall and portly, very hot and very angry, is in high altercation with a burly and loud-tongued butcher, whom neither threat nor persuasion has ever induced to send in a bill during the three months the family has been here, and who now, at the eleventh hour, appears with an exorbitant one, which he insists upon having settled without question upon the spot.

"I'm well known in the neighborhood," he storms.

(He is, but how?) "You ask the folks all round."

"Then confound it, my good man!" roars Mr. Tramberley, but the flesher heeds not.

"I don't want any stranger to come and 'good man'

me. You've had my meat. I wants my money," and

then suoni la tromba proceeds.

Bobby and Willie, the two schoolboys who never seem to be at school, are having a game at cricket with a real bat and ball, and a sofa bolster for a wicket, while their numerous brothers and sisters cry, laugh, and scream all over the place.

"Beatrix," shouts the poor furious father, "will you

stop your piano? I'm deafened."

Whereupon the third girl does stop for nearly threequarters of a minute, filling up that interval by fielding at cricket. As a rule, no earthly power can persuade this female urchin to practice, but to-day, whether from remorse for music-lessons wasted, or more probably prompted by that spirit of devilment which at times tempts the young to make confusion worse confounded, the little imp of thirteen has been hammering away at "Trab, trab" all the morning, seeming to execute it chiefly with her fists Two of the smaller children have evidently and elbows. agreed to bawl for a prize upon the hearthrug, while the only nurse-of course an Irishwoman, with a voice like her national bagpipes-and the local slavey appear chiefly occupied in exchanging stations at the top and bottom of the house, and screeching an intermittent volley of instructions to one another through the well of the stair-

An infant in arms, who to-day is not in arms but rolled up, put away in a corner and forgotten in an upper bedroom, by its screaming plays the part of fifty fifes in this discordant orchestra; and in conjunction with Emmeline, the dowager baby's rattle, the untiring bark of Dukey, the Tramberley dog, little Dicky's drum, and little Charlie's trumpet forms a counterpoise to the unfailing cat-calls in the street, for the windows are as wide open as the front door; and they altogether impart quite a fine Wagnerian balance to the infernal symphony, while the unbroken and thunder-like rumblings of omnibuses round the corner supply its deep bass or foundation.

Just as the noise storm was at its height, a man might have been seen approaching at a leisurely pace who, in his person and bearing, seemed a very spirit of peace come to quell the whirlwind. He looked about seven-and-twenty; his face was handsome and framed in soft light whiskers,

which, like the hair, were very carefully trimmed. His figure and gait were exceptionally good, his dress was faultless. Indeed, the attire of this dandy, for such he is, and a good deal more besides, makes the despair of his rivals. With nothing about it either grand or showy, nothing which to the uninitiated speaks of money, its merit is in the quiet perfection of material, cut, and fit. To take only one item, his boots. No patent leather or varnish ever invaded his precincts-those stocks-intrade of the cheaply-smart, which are enough for a wellbred horse to "shy at." The fine calf boots of the Hon. Felix Elton, for that is the name of this scientifically unadorned-adorned one, absorb the existence of a fellowcreature, and that creature not his valet, but a humble suffragon of the same. Yes, the "trees," the endless operation termed "boneing," the talent, elbow grease, and patience which go to this one feature of Mr. Elton's dress would fill a chapter.

He moves in what is perhaps vulgarly called the first society, and is the second son of an earl, with a large fortune from his mother, who, like his father, is long since dead. Elton, be it understood, is much too fine to be fine, and that is why we meet him here this morning. He reaches the doorstep, and does not betray the slightest surprise at the confusion or the din. He affects to see none of the persons who are rushing about, but knocks at the open door as if he never knocked at shut ones; then

stands with his back to it.

Miss Tramberley has had time to recognize the visitor from her cab, and buries even her head among the rub-

bish. She knows she is not fit to be seen.

Mr. Elton's first summons not having been heard, he presently knocks a little louder, with the strange result of instantly plunging the whole household into silence. Such is the power in our rank-adoring middle classes, such the magic of anything aristocratic, that even a well-bred knock thrills men through and through.

A dozen of the late noisy ones, some having peeped through the windows, some from the staircase, simultaneously and in stage whispers inform papa and mamma that it is "Tom's friend, the Hon. Mr. Felix Elton."

"Heavens, how unfortunate!" exclaims poor Mr. Tram-

berley.

"Not at home," that "shut Sesame" of the shabby genteel, is out of the question.

A gleam of hope! He may be only leaving a card. Nurse or the slavey? Which shall be thrust forward?

All say nurse, but that official, Hibernian though she be, turns shy and won't move. Slavey, then! Mrs. Tramberley with her own dirty hands knocks about Sarah Jones' distraught locks and remains of a cap for a second or two, under the insane idea that she is arranging them; tears off the girl's foul apron, but seeing what it reveals, huddles it on again, and flings her into the passage to encounter the great man.

"Is Mr. Tramberley at home?" he asks demurely.

"E be up-stairs; shall I call 'im?" replies the little London savage.

"No, thank you. Show me up, please."

"This ways, Honorable," says the girl, for she has

heard enough about his rank, and she leads him up.

During the above colloquy, strange to say, even the butcher has been temporarily subdued and smuggled away to the back of the back drawing-room, and the very parrot has stopped screeching, under the impression that he may learn a new note.

"How do you do?" says Elton, shaking hands with his host. "I'm afraid I disturb you, for I see you are mov-

ing."

"Not at all," says Mr. Tramberley, trying to look at his ease, get the butcher's row out of his features, and assume his company manners. "Won't you sit down?"

Meanwhile the children, weaned from their various sports, all stand round gaping at the visitor, as if he were a wild beast. This adds to the embarrassment of the father, who, however, hasn't the slightest idea what to do with them.

Before Mr. Elton accepts a seat he says, smiling pleas-

antly at his entertainer and then at the children-

"Pray forgive me, but these little people," and he wins each young heart as he beams upon them—

"Oh! that sweet aspect of princes!"

"If they would not mind leaving us alone for a short time; I—I have something I should like to speak to you about," and there is a strange hesitation, even confusion in this Adonis of god-like repose, a positive diffidence as he says these few words, which finishes the bewilderment of Mr. Tramberley.

"Certainly, certainly," stammers the latter; "you see-

we are rather upside down."

"I'm so sorry I intrude, but-"

"Not at all. It isn't that. I mean, as you remarked, we happen to be moving, but there is plenty of time, more than two hours before we need go, and—but pray sit down—"

And making a clean sweep of a chair that had only two feet high of books and papers piled upon it, he offers it with a little flourish to Elton, who, this time, sits

down.

"Children, run away," said the poor parent, in a tone between command and entreaty—a tone that while it may inspire awe, he hopes, in his rampageous progeny, may not impress the visitors as being too impolite; and the little Tramberleys, being, like their parents, inveterate toadies and tuft-hunters—most children are—retired in quite a well-bred manner, soon, however, to become noisy on the stairs. However, the doors, folding ones and all, are shut, and the mysterious audience commences.

The Tramberleys, though here introduced at their worst, are never, as a whole, a very interesting family. Still they are excellently good people in their way. To sum them up in a word, they are shabby genteel, and more shabby than genteel. Always squabbling yet very fond of each other, perfectly honest and honorable, with excellent hearts, they have only too much pride; without sense, tact, or above all, breeding, enough to save that pride

from endless wounds and humiliations.

The Tramberleys qua Tramberleys are simply nobodies, and it is their slender hanging-on to the upper ten that is the ruin of them. Mr. Tramberley is, through his mother, third cousin to the Earl of Auchinlee, and his wife, though a Miss Davis, had a general for her grandfather.

These connections, and the fact that they are Britons, render their aspirations very high, making them content to be pauper gentlefolks rather than touch trade or embark in any business whatever. Luckily for them, their whole fortune, seven hundred a year, is locked up in Consols and settled on their children, or it would long since

have melted away. Still, they are always running in debt to the tune of a hundred or two, and then undergoing all kinds of shifts till the next dividend falls due. They cannot tell how it is, for they think theirs is a very gentlemanly income. To be sure, Mr. Tramberley, in preparing his budget, allows little or nothing for extras, and then he often pays between two and three hundred a year for house rent. Moreover, despite the proverb, "Three moves are as bad as a fire," the Tramberleys seldom execute less than three of these maneuvers during the year; always for admirable reasons, no doubt, among which a desire to retrench generally figures as prime motive. You see they are full of delusions of all kinds. For instance, they must always entertain those above them in position whenever they think a social step is to be gained thereby. It never strikes either Mr. or Mrs. Tramberley that they have been invited to some decent house sheerly out of kindness for auld lang syne, or on account of a letter of introduction obtained, Heaven knows how, but that their entertainers, who are rich and well-placed, will not care to come to a miserable house to meet odds and ends of society, or people who are in none, and to partake of extemporized refreshments wretchedly served by a hired waiter or two.

It is this itching to entertain which makes the bane of so many climbers on the social ladder. To give a party or a dance is to publish a list of the people you ought to know, but do not. It is the absentees who are most conspicuous. If you have lots of money—and without it, society is better left alone, it loathes the needy—if you are rich and ambitious, stick to dinners of from a dozen to fourteen downward.

Always supposing you have any talent for giving them, they will do you more good than anything, for, as a rule, the straightest way to people's hearts is down their throats. Now it was at the Tramberleys' awful parties that our dandy had first beheld the family—a party made up of a few middle-class people like themselves, two or three decent individuals who, like Mr. Elton, seemed to be brought there by accident, having apparently lost their way, and finally of that lowest social stratum of all, damaged nobility.

Tom Tramberley, the eldest son, is in the Marines, and

he had, years ago, read with Elton at a certain well-known Portsmouth crammer's, at a time when he, too, had thoughts of going into the Life Guards. He had taken a great liking to Tom, who was three years his junior, and not without cause, for Tramberley though he be, he is not without a certain niceness of his own, which would merit some notice only that he has nothing to do with this history. He is away at sea now, where we will leave him, but a month ago he was on leave, and, meeting Elton one day in the park, the intimacy was soon renewed. As Tom knew nothing of society, he had listened to the family prayer and made a point of bringing his "swell" friend to the parental wild beast show in the moldy little house

in the moldy little street near the Edgware-road.

Besides Tom, there is one Tramberley who is really nice, and whom we have not yet seen, for she is already at Cheltenham, gone on a visit to a horrid old aunt, who bullies and makes a servant of her; and that is Angela, the second daughter, who is nineteen, and very pretty as girls go. But then, Angey is, as it were, not a Tramberley, being a regular instance of a dove in a crow's nest. Noise was never her element. She never, from the time she was quite little, felt at home with her own family. Her horrible old aunt, any refuge, however purgatorial, was preferable to the Tramberley foyer. Yet she loves her father and mother, every one of her brothers and sisters, very much individually. It is the family, the way they go on to each other, the home, which Angey's quiet, peaceful nature cannot brook.

On the other hand, this said family adore her both individually and as a whole. No other Tramberley is especially well favored. Her elder sister Lucy, the girl you saw packed up in the cab, is decidedly plain, and all the Tramberleys have long vaguely—they are always vague—looked to Angey to drag them out of the mire. By-the-bye, how is it that in an ugly family we sometimes find one beauty; in a set of stupid relations one bright member; and stranger and rarer still, as in this instance, in a vulgar family one sweet girl who is all refinement, and to use a hackneyed term, one of nature's gentle-

women.

It was certainly and indisputably in the abstract the most wildly foolish thing of the Tramberleys to give that

last party of theirs at all. It was transcendentally idiotic to invite Mr. Elton, that being the likeliest way of parting him forever from Tom, to whom his great social influence might be of great use. And yet—as things turned out—

"It only shows
One never knows,
Tra la la, la la la."

Needless to say how hunted down and stalked to death the exquisite Elton had already been by those cruel Nimrodesses, the London mothers, heartily seconded in this case by endless packs of lovely daughters, and eke of plain, each individual of whom longed to pull down the noble quarry. Yes, he had been coaxed, smothered by billet doux and invitation cards, even bullied and driven into corners. His pride had been appealed to, his admiration, down to his very pity! In a word, the whole scientific gamut had been sounded, and all the time-honored changes had been rung in vain.

Elton was not merely too clear-sighted to be caught; it may even be said that he was very unjust, for he failed to make reservation in his cynical estimate of girls of the season in favor of those exceptional ones who bring gen-

tine wares to the great matrimonial bazaar.

To him, spoiled as he was, all were alike; that is, all like

the worst.

"Oh, you are everything I please just now," he would exclaim in his self-communings, "but if I want to know what any one of you would become directly I married her, I have only to turn my eyes to the young wives who surround me. They too, make a great deal more of me than those hooked and landed fish, their husbands. Some elope with other men, some are satisfied to stay and annoy their liege lords by every means in their power. What if I married the sister of my lord marquis, who today played the humble so bewitchingly! As soon as she found herself Lady Clara Elton she would, ten to one, take good care to make me feel she had thrown herself away upon a commoner, and done me a never-to-be-forgotten favor in accepting me!"

In short, it has long been his dream to marry some young lady who was not in society, although fit and long-

ing to be so; one who but for him would "bloom unseen," and wither as the spouse of some other Mr. Tramberley, unappreciating and but half appreciated—one, in a word, who on waking each morning for the rest of her natural life would say—

"Thank heaver and my husband, I am Mrs. Elton!"

But where was this child of fashion to meet with his unfashionable dream? In the street, or in some other public place? He could hardly speak to her if he did so; and should she so far forget herself as to reply, such conduct would put her at once out of court. In the whole social range—and no one went up and down it more perseveringly than Felix Elton, from the bright mountain tops even to the secret of the valleys—there was but one section which he ever and inevitably skipped, and that was the Trambelian. A duchess often visits the homestead of the farmer, the cottages of the poor, but the circumstances are hardly conceivable which should bring her to a party at such a petits gens as Angela belonged to.

And so it needed that fate should weave even such a a web as Elton meeting Tom at the trough of learning taking a friendship for the boy, their running up against each other in the park years later, and Tom pressing the "smart man" to come to the maternal bear-fight under domestic pressure—it required all this unlikely and elaborate machinery of Felix Elton to meet with Angey Tramberley under conditions in which he might legiti-

mately accost her.

What an artificial world it is!

Angey being the "show" offspring of the family, it is needless to say that Elton had not been three minutes at the party when the poor girl was brought up to him and introduced by papa and mamma simultaneously, both parents naïvely exhibiting the keenest curiosity as to the effect Angey should produce. Elton was always more undemonstrative than a lamp-post in daytime and yet even he could not control the admiration of his glance as it fell for the first time on this fair victim.

Blushing in her beauty as she stood before him, with supporters more terrible than any pair of grinning monsters in the whole menagerie of the peerage, her depre-

cating mien seemed sweetly to plead:-

"O fair young knight, take me as I am, and perhaps

you may endure me in spite of these showman puffs and the mob which surround us."

And he took her at her unspoken word. How he managed it, in that crowded room, no one ever knew-Angey least of all; but without seeming to do anything, and hardly to move, he contrived in a minute or two to be sitting with his little new friend in a corner behind a barricade of dowagers, and talking away as if they had known each other for years. Angey was really a delightful little thing not only to talk to but to contemplate. Have you never noticed a disagreeable look that generally runs through very large families, of their having been supplied wholesale and in a hurry, before time had been taken to finish each individual? Plenty of raw material, but of somewhat coarse grain. Well, it was present in the rest of the brood, but conspicuously absent in Angey. flesh was firm and smooth like ivory, with just the faintest soupçon of that creamy yellow, lacking which no beauty is ever brilliant by night. Her hair, of a light, rather cold brown, was abundant and silky. She had plenty of the flush of health, but this was seldom of the same depth for two consecutive minutes, revealing at once her singularly endowed and sensitive nature. The full honest eyes were just as blue as blue could be-a common color to hear of but the rarest of all to see-and bordered all round by long lashes darker than her locks, and, like them, full of curl. But to many Angey's distinctive charm was the extraordinary fineness of her skin and the purity of her complexion.

Angey had opposed with all her might the project of

bringing Elton to their "drum."

"If he cares about Tom," she had said, "enough to help him at all he will do it all the more for not being teased to come out of his own set to be bored at an out-of-the-way little party like ours."

She was a power in the family, but notwithstanding she was out-voted in this momentous question, and to-night

she is glad that it was so.

"Suppose we sit down here," Elton had said to her after the first few words had been exchanged. It was neither an order nor a request, but she felt that if for any reason she wished to decline—and there was none—she could not have done so. From their first contact her new friend

seemed to control her will, yet without purposely exer-

cising his own to influence her.

"I am afraid," she said presently, "you will have a stupid evening, but I dare say you are going on to other places. I see by the Morning Post there are three balls to-night."

"Do you read the Morning Post?"

"Always, and wonder if I shall get a peep at the fêtes it talks of."

"You do not go out much, then?"

"Nowhere—nowhere of that sort. We know none of the right people; how should we? And fortunate too, for how could we afford the life?"

"Yes, society is a funny thing," said Elton. "It is a game, and great fun for those who are in condition to

play it."

" How do you mean?"

"Why, to play any game with interest, it must not be too easy. All the people I have ever known who really care for society are those either struggling to get into it, or else to improve the position they have conquered, or at all events to maintain it against great difficulties. Rob the battle of its heartburnings, jealousies, wild hopes, and bitter disappointments, and its whole zest is gone. The moment 'going out,' as it is called, becomes a mere matter of duty, or at least of kindness, and, you can take my word for it, a greater bore does not exist."

"Do you know I have sometimes suspected it? I always think"—and she laughed a low laugh and broke

off—"but it is so foolish."

"Let me judge of that."

"In my favorite Morning Post the scroll on which Fashionable World' is written by way of a heading is twined and almost buried among thorns and brambles, with, oh! only such a few roses, and those you could not pluck without tearing your hands. Well, I often wonder—but of course it isn't—I often wonder whether the little vignette, which I knew well enough professes to represent the rose, shamrock, and thistle of the three kingdoms, does not really cover some cynical jest."

It was Felix Elton's turn to laugh now, and the thought seemed so simple he wondered it had never struck him

before.

"You have an imaginative little mind," he said, "by which I don't mean that it is little at all, if you see the paradox. But to pursue the subject of gayeties, two of the ball givers have been good enough to ask me tonight."

"And shall you go? Of course you will."

"I think not."
"But why?"

"For a reason I must not tell you."

" Do."

"I said I must not. Not I would not."

"I am dumb, but lost in wonder."

"I will—I think I will tell you some day."

"Oh, I thought I should never see you again."

"Why?"

"It is so unlikely."
"May I not call?"

"Oh, I forgot that," and Angey thought of the domicile in its undress, and changed the subject. "Let me see, supposing you did go to Hanover House to-night—I suppose—how would you get there? In a carriage, of course."

" Yes."

"In what sort of carriage do—does—a man like you go about at night! Oh, I know—a brougham."

"Precisely. But why do you say this?"

"I always have to go in a cab, that is why; and it takes all the gilt off the gingerbread. Is your brougham waiting now?"

"Yes, I hope so. I told it to."

"I have seldom been in even a hired carriage. We can't afford them, and never, no, I think never, in a real first-rate private one. My eldest sister has though and she says it is so strange the noisy streets seem quite silent with the glasses up and there is no shaking at all. What is your brougham lined with? Satin?"

"No, blue leather," laughed Elton, much amused. This was all so new to him, and quite in tune with his old dream. "And now tell me, shall you be in town all the season? Your brother told me, I think, before he went

away, that you were contemplating a move."

"Yes, we are always moving," said Angey, with an unconscious sigh. "I am going on a visit to my aunt Sarah at Cheltenham the day after to-morrow, and the others follow next week-not on a visit to her, but to stay at Richmond, where they have taken a house."

"Dear me! I am sorry you are off so soon.

He spoke the common-place words half absently, yet so palpably for his own sake, not for hers, that their sincerity quite startled her as certainly no elaborate and accentuated sentence could have done. She looked up at his handsome face with her great candid eyes, and said simply-

"That is very kind of you."

"I am sorry," he went on, speaking, however, as a man does when he knows he had better remain silent, for was he not going too far for the first night? "And it upsets a little plan I have been forming about you."

"About me?"

"Y-yes. Oh, only a moment ago. I did not mean to tell you to-night, I haven't-I don't know you well enough, and now you are going away makes my project impossible, so I will not give you the trouble of hearing about it."

"And have you no pity for a woman's curiosity? Don't you want me to sleep to-night?" she said smiling play-

fully.

Felix Elton bit his lips. He did not often let them

run away with him.
"You see," he went on, "so much depends on the manner of doing things; above all, on the lapse of a little time. To blurt out what I thought of here-now-the very first time we meet, would be preposterous and noth-

ing short of a great liberty."

"He take a liberty with her," she thought. She knew him well enough already to guess that she was very likely to esteem his liberty an honor. She said, "Well, but I understand. It is not you who volunteer what you are going to say; it is I who ask you as a kindness not to tantalize me."

And so, after a little more pressing, he told her that he too had an aunt-the kindest, sweetest old lady, who of all his relations spoilt him most, and whom he could in fact twist round his thumb—an aunt, Lady Follitt by name, who having married both her daughters was in great want of a young and attractive excuse for still going to balls, which she delighted in, and who would have

jumped at the chance of being introduced to Mrs. Tramberley to solicit the favor of being allowed sometimes to take out Miss Angela. He described the whole plan very charmingly—at least, so his fair listener thought—and ended by saying, with a very tender glance indeed, though this she did not quite see, as she was looking down a good deal at the time, but she felt it—

"And I thought if you would condescend to accept the post, what a particularly delightful excuse you would be."

Just as these two young people were getting on so much to their natural taste as to become oblivious of all that surrounded them, Mrs. 'Iramberley, under the impression that it was the imperative thing to do, came up with a dreadful City Knight's wife in tow, and bending over an intervening row of people, roughly dispelled their dream with—

"Mr. Elton—Mr. Elton, would you not wish to take some light refreshment. Let me introduce Lady Hooker. Will you take her down?"

And Angey's little spell of content was over for some

time to come.

After Elton had been some ten minutes in the dining-room and pretended—he is so well-bred—to consume a warm ice and some cool negus—all for Angey's sake, and the little fox guessed it!—he handed my Lady Knightness up the narrow way which did not lead to heaven, deposited her upon the nearest chair, and slipped away.

His other engagements sighed for him in vain that

night.

CHAPTER XVI.

NOT A PEER.

ALL this while Mr. Tramberley and his unexpected visitor have been left taking a preparatory glance at each other before opening their conversation in earnest. A task which evidently devolved upon the young man, for his host had not the slightest idea of what was coming, although as he afterward told his better half, "he saw in a twinkling there was something up," which set him all of a flurry. Nor did Elton, now they were alone, keep him long in suspense; he began—

"Mr. Tramberley, I should not of course—finding you so busy—prolong my visit another minute unless I had something important to say—important, that is, to myself; for I have no idea in what light either you or—or any of your family may look upon the matter."

Mr. Tramberley bowed from the waist, and said, rub-

bing his hands—
"Pray proceed."

"I must beg you," said Elton, "to excuse the abruptness of what I am doing because I felt obliged to take what little time there has been for reflection, and now you are on the point of leaving. Briefly then I have come to ask your leave to pay my addresses to your daughter."

And here the lover-for such an hour's intercourse with

Angey had made him-blushed like a school boy.

It is a way with fathers to imagine, under such circumstances, that any words like these necessarily refer to their eldest female child, even when that child is forty and hideous. Mr. Tramberley in his turn grew scarlet from feelings too obvious to define, and utterly losing the little composure he had assumed stammered forth—

"Indeed, sir, you do me—us—infinite honor, and I am sure our dear Lucy ought to feel flattered at so—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Elton, with a sudden look of horror—he had forgotten the very existence of his future sister-in-law except as one of the numerous Tramberleys. "Pardon me—most natural mistake on your part, of course, but it was to your second daughter I referred."

"Oh, to Angey!" said the anxious parent in a tone that involuntarily replied, "Now, I understand. That is

much less surprising."

"To Miss Angela Tramberley, yes. Though I have only had the privilege of conversing with her once I am quite resolved on my side to ask her to be my wife, if no insuperable obstacle should prevent it."

"Prevent it!" said the father, his face falling at the

thought.

"Yes, I might very easily fail to win her heart, or perhaps, even your consent."

"Oh, as to that,"—put in the other relieved.

"My dear sir, you cannot tell until you have kindly listened to what I have to say. I need hardly point out to you how very far better it is that any difficulties—any

obstacles, surmountable or otherwise, to this union should

be discussed and confronted now than later on."

"My dear sir, in that view I fully concur." Poor Mr. Tramberley, you see, was under that curious impression so general among his class, that great people always speak with a stilted and unconversational diction, something like that of an official document, and he strove to adopt it himself on this occasion. He was too flurried to notice the utter simplicity with which the individual specimen of high life before him expressed his ideas. Elton pursued:-

"The principal thing I have to say is not a pleasant one, and it will sound particularly hard and ungracious from having to be said in a hurry."

"Mr. Elton, I am thoroughly alive to the circumstances, and shall make all due allowance, believe me. We are two gentlemen speaking frankly to each other."

"Yes, but for all that it is not easy to say. However, I will do my best. You might not unnaturally think that from my being what is called rich, from my living much in London, and-and perhaps other circumstances, that in the event of your daughter consenting some day to be my wife, she and I might be the means of introducing her family to many of the people who give the principal entertainments in town, whose doings are reported in the Morning Post and Court Circular. Now, from what I have gathered from my friend, your son, you have not for many years spent much time in London. says, too, that you make no secret of the fact that you wish for some years to live quietly, with a view to putting by for the benefit of your children."

Mr. Tramberley, not quite seeing his interlocutor's

drift, thought it safest to emit an equivocal "Hum."

"But," continued Elton, "supposing you should, after the marriage, decide to live in London, and should wish to enter, through us, into that gay world of which I speak-and I do not say but what it would be most natural-I feel bound to warn you from the first, for it is a point upon which, of all others, there must be the clearest understanding, that neither I nor your daughter could do anything for you in that way."

Tramberley sat aghast. He was destined to pass from astonishment to astonishment to-day. He thought it, in his heart, very rude, and in fact, nasty of this young swell who was asking for Angey as so great a boon, to couple his request with this almost insulting condition. At the same time, he was horribly afraid of offending Elton by word or sign.

At last he summoned courage to ask-

"May I be so indiscreet as to ask why? Mrs. Tramberley's grandfather was General Smith. I am myself a

cousin of Lady Muriel Alston-"

"Pray forgive my interrupting you, but it is not at all that to which I allude. She who has so deeply impressed me shows her gentle blood at every pore. What I mean is that it is practically impossible to mix sets. You may be almost royal, and yet if you leave London for a few seasons you will find on returning that you are nowhere and nobody, unless, that is, that you come with many devoted thousands in your pockets, take a palace, and get a duchess to invite your company: in which case, mind, your former status might as well be nil."

"Am I to understand, then, that we are to see no more of Angela after she becomes your wife?" and as he chokingly said this the poor father's eyes filled with tears.

It was like offering a child a bun on condition it would

agree to a sound thrashing.

Elton was instantly deeply touched. He could never, for all his connections, have been the perfect prince he

was but for the goodness of his heart.

"Nothing of the kind, nothing of the kind, my dear Mr. Tramberley, believe me. Of us you shall see as much as ever you like, and we of you in a quiet and intimate way. If my wife gave a ball, she would, of course, like to have a sister or two to enjoy it with her, her brother Tom, too, if get-at-able; but I feel bound to tell you that you and Mrs. Tramberly would not be asked any more than to large dinner parties."

"Mr. Elton, everything that you have said requires

consideration."

"Did I not say so?"

"To be frank as you are, sir, I must tell you that my wife and I have always rather looked to Angey to lift us up some day. Eliza always said—Eliza is Mrs. Tramberley, sir—that the others would go off at small shots, but that Angela was destined for a peeress."

"I am no peer."

"I am only telling you what Eliza said. I doubt, sir, on reflection, whether my daughter herself would like to wed any man who was ashamed of us."

"But, my dear sir, you misunderstand me."

"No, I don't, sir, believe me."

The fact is that Elton's proposal now quite changed all good Mr. Tramberley's views. That mythical coronet of his wife's vaticinations had always till now seemed to him problematical in the extreme. But now the world wore a new aspect. If the Earl of Harborough's rich brother and heir presumptive had asked for Angey's hand after seeing her once only, why should not marquises and dukes, by Jove!—yes, dukes,—pour down from Heaven henceforth like hail?

It suddenly struck him that one advantage he could at any rate seize over his adversary, as he now mentally designated Elton, that of being the first to move the adjournment of the interview. Rising, he said to him,

Elton having, of course, risen too—

"Yes, all this requires thought and counsel. Kindly give me your card. Thank you. I will confer with Mrs. Tramberley—with our dear child. In any case, believe me, Mr. Elton, I feel deeply the honor you are doing us. Your conditions are not flattering, although from your point of view they may appear necessary. I have no doubt they do."

"Most necessary indeed," said Elton firmly, "or I should not have pained you by imposing them. In every other respect—settlements and all that—I assure you you shall be more than satisfied. Tell me by what day I may

hope to hear from you."

Well, to-day is Wednesday—hum!—shall we say Mon-

day?"

"Certainly. On Monday, then, I shall hope to hear from you. Good morning. My best compliments to Mrs. Tramberley."

"I shall not fail," said the other, resuming his little

pomposity.

And so the two shook hands and parted, Elton to thread his way through the motley impedimenta, living and otherwise, of the staircase, down and out into the street, as he

gained which he could not restrain the fervent, halfuttered ejaculation-

"Yes, the little girl is an angel indeed; but, thank Heaven, I'm not marrying the family!"

CHAPTER XVII.

SECOND POST.

For three weeks Bertha remained a prisoner in her own room. She could not put her foot to the ground, and was altogether so ill that she seemed scarcely to notice anything that was passing around her.

She seldom spoke to any one, except when circumstances absolutely enforced it, never to Lady Muriel, save in the

merest monosyllables.

Christian she had not seen since the evening ne carried her up stairs, and though during the first week of her illness she had been frequently told by Lady Muriel of his inquiries after her, she had evinced so little interest in the matter that of late his name had never been mentioned, and she did not know whether he was still at Dale House or whether he had left England for foreign climes, as she had overheard him express his determination to do.

At the end of three weeks Bertha was on her sofa, struggling through a weary convalescence. She could just manage to walk a few yards; but what puzzled her

doctor and attendants was her most unjoyful state.

She who used to be so bright-looking and full of young life, it was indeed sad to watch her as she lay pretending to read a book, of which she scarcely ever turned a page, black rings about her gray eyes, her white cheeks sunken

and haggard.

What it could mean, unless she was dying, no one could understand, least of all, Lady Muriel, who displayed all the energy with which she was so richly endowed in her determination to be useful and do the best that could be done for Bertha, thus giving a not very unusual example of how some people will slay with one hand the very individual on whom they are heaping benefits with the other.

Meanwhile the only pleasure Bertha ever seemed to

have, the only time she smiled, was when little Eric came to see her; she could not play and romp with him as she had once done, but she would let him lie beside her on her couch till he grew tired of quietude and would ask to go to his nurse.

Once or twice there were traces of tears on Lady Muriel's face as she walked about Dale House with a stealthy step, and the servants who saw them observed to each other that, "If there was a being on earth Lady Muriel"

loved, certainly that being was Miss Yorke."

They could not know that Lady Muriel had a private sorrow that distressed her even more than Bertha's help-less state, and it was well, perhaps, that poor Bertha could be used as the screen behind which, as had been the case for some long time past, Lady Muriel's most poignant

phases of joy and sorrow could be hidden.

Christian was the real cause of her deepest misery now. Christian, who, say what she would, was still determined on exchanging into a regiment on foreign service. His leave had expired two days after Bertha's accident, and he had been compelled to go; but his letters of inquiry to Lady Muriel about Bertha were so closely veiled that she had failed to discover in them the deep love for her young cousin which these affectionate missives to herself concealed.

Christian almost feared Lady Muriel, and he dared not be true while his darling was in this woman's charge.

His darling! He little knew with what contempt Bertha had learned to regard both himself and Lady Muriel, how she was fretting her young life away because in the two people she had loved best and trusted most on earth

she had discovered falsehood and deceit.

She is lying on the sofa in the sunshine with little Eric by her side; she is humming in a low tone to the half mesmerized child, a plaintive dirge-like melody, when Lady Muriel bursts into the room with an impetuosity to which she is prone, but which she has kept in a state of dead-locked subjection ever since Bertha has been ill. It can, however, be repressed no longer, and she cries out angrily—

"Only think, Bertha, Mr. Schippheim has announced

his intention of marrying Patty Urske."

It was the first breath of outer air that had gained ad-

mission into the sick girl's room for three weeks, and the sudden gust was such a strong one that it nearly capsized her frail bark.

She became first so crimson-red, even to her very temples, then so ghastly white, that Lady Muriel was quite alarmed, and regretted the temerity of her announcement, though why it should affect Bertha thus she could not conceive, except that she was too weak to bear any excitement.

She snatched the child from the sofa, and put him on the ground, where of course he began to cry. Then she poured some eau-de-Cologne on Bertha's forehead, and fanned her till she opened her eyes.

"My poor, dear Bertha, I am sorry I told you. You are not well enough yet to be bothered with factory gossip. Don't trouble, child. I daresay we shall find some means to put this nonsense out of Mr. Schippheim's head; at any rate, we will try. Have some soup, Bertha dear, and don't worry your little self. Eric, if you don't leave off crying you shall not come and see cousin Bertha again."

"Let me have the child, please; he will be quiet here."
Eric was put back into his position on the sofa, where
he nestled down very peaceably, and then Bertha said—

"Now I am all right, tell me what you know about this

affair."

"I think we had better wait till you are stronger."

- "No, Lady Muriel, I should like to know about it now."
- "Lady Muriel," instead of "cousin Muriel," and the altered tone, surprised her ladyship, but she ascribed all Bertha's unusual behavior to illness, and, nothing loath to say her say about Max Schippheim and his folly, as she called it, began a long and somewhat circumstantial account of how this little brazen-faced minx had lured a good respectable man, as Max Schippheim had always been until now, into the paths of wickedness and destruction.
- "Getting all his money out of him and flaunting about and giving herself airs as if she were a queen. They say she is actually going to buy a share in Mrs. Bligh's laundry, with money she pretends her grandmother left her; of course, it is Mr. Schippheim's."

"I daresay her Granny did leave her some money; she was a provident old dame," suggested Bertha.

"Don't be so horribly trustful, Bertha-you always be-

lieve every one."

"Do I?" and Bertha turned her large gray eyes on Lady Muriel, who flinched just a little as she met their gaze, and hurriedly pursued the subject under discussion. "Of course, it is Max Schippheim's money."

"But if he is going to marry her, what does he want to

put her into a laundry for?" asked Bertha practically.

"It is a blind, dear—a mere blind, in order to assert what they are pleased to call the girl's independence—her dependence I should call it; but, of course, the marriage must be stopped; at all hazards it must be prevented."

"It will not make much difference," half murmured

Bertha.

"No difference! My dear Bertha, you must be mad. It will ruin the factory, us, everybody, if that old idiot is

allowed to marry a low-born hussy like that."

Bertha, under other circumstances, would have laughed at the idea of Lady Muriel calling the great senior partner "an old idiot—." Lady Muriel, who until now had ever regarded him more or less in the light of an oracle; but she did not even smile—only said very quietly—

"I suppose you would not have minded if he had mar-

ried some one else—me—for instance!"

"You! There never was any question of your marrying Max Schippheim—quite the contrary; but I suppose you are not aware that if Mr. Schippheim marries it will so seriously damage some one else's prospects that it is doubtful if he will ever marry at all."

"I do not think I shall ever marry at all," said Bertha, in a very low voice, turning away, and hiding her face in

the folds of Eric's frock.

"I suppose she thinks she is going to die. I wonder what we are to do with her," was Lady Muriel's mental

remark, but she was wrong.

Bertha felt very instinct with life; she was only blundering in semi-darkness, through the first stages of a great disappointment, making up her mind as she went along what her plan of life should be in the future; for that it should be changed she was quite determined.

As long as she was a minor, and Mr. Alston had her

money, she was more or less dependent on these people; yet, to live for four years on terms of friendly intimacy with Lady Muriel after what she had overheard in the wood that evening, was, she felt, more than she coul dendure. Lady Muriel, for whom all her love was turned to hate, and whose very touch seemed to corrode her flesh, while her breath seemed to scatter poisoned words!

She was glad when, after a time, Lady Muriel went away, and took little Eric with her; thus leaving her free to think over the piece of information she had just re-

ceived.

Personally, as matters were now, she did not see how it could especially influence her life, yet instinctively she seemed to know that if Max Schippheim did really marry the little gold-burnisher, a new era would commence in Arundale, an era in which Lady Muriel would scarcely play a conspicuously pleasing part, Lady Muriel in rivalry with Patty the ex-hand! No, it was utterly incompatible; Lady Muriel had said she would prevent the marriage, and she would.

But how?

That Bertha did not feel equal to consider, but she had known Lady Muriel long enough to be aware that she generally found the means of carrying her intentions into effect, nor, viewing Lady Muriel from the point at which Bertha had now arrived, did she perhaps think that her noble kinswoman would be very scrupulous as to the means.

One thing, however, that morning's conversation had made Bertha resolve to do; that was, to get better as quickly as possible. Her sprained foot was nearly well; that need keep her a prisoner no longer. She would like to see Patty, ascertain for herself what was going on in Arundale, and that she could only do by walking down there.

In future Bertha meant to act for herself without asking advice from anyone or looking up to anyone for guidance. Had she not learnt that you can be sure of nothing in this world but deceit? Yes, during the last three weeks Bertha's character had been slowly but surely developing, and the moment to take her actions into her own keeping had arrived. She got up and limped to the window; notwithstanding her determination to be well, her limping

days were not over yet, but she did not mind that; her walking powers would soon return; if she could only get rid of the intense feeling of loathing which had taken possession of her of late, how much happier she would feel. It made her very wretched, not only to loathe those she had once loved the best, but to feel the bitter sentiment extending to every one, who, according to her diseased fancy, pretended to be true and noble. For Bertha had not yet schooled herself into being utterly cold and heartless, though she stood on the threshold of the academy where cynicism and distrust are taught.

It was a fair picture that on which she gazed, as she looked out of the window; but Nature in her fairest garb was powerless to awaken sympathy in Bertha's heart that day. It was with her as though all softening influences slept, and it might be years before they were re-awakened, even if the happy hour should ever arrive. The very birds in the trees seemed to sing out of tune, and the flowers had

lost their beauty.

The letter-carrier with the second post came along the

narrow path leading to Arundale.

This carrier was a girl employed by Lady Muriel to bring the second letters from the post-office. She had lost one arm from an accident when she was a child, and this trifling occupation had been given her to help her widowed mother's very modest wages.

This girl was a great pet of Bertha's, and she dropped a courtesy and looked vastly pleased when she saw the young lady at the window, very much disappointed too when Bertha took no notice of her, save a careless nod, not even asking her, as she generally did, whom the letters were for.

What did it matter to Bertha now whether those who called themselves friends wrote to her or whether they did not, since no one was true. The only letter, however, which the one-armed post-woman brought that day was for Bertha, and it was from a girl, who, after Lady Muriel and Christian, was the being she loved best in life. She took it from the servant who, a few minutes later, brought it to her, and began to read it very mechanically.

" Barrack Grange, Richmond, Surrey.

[&]quot;My DEAR BERTHA,—I came back from Cheltenham into the noisy bosom of my dear untidy family only the day before yesterday, and the contrast between my aunt's temple of silence and my present

surroundings is almost greater than one can get over in a few days. The first thing I did on my return was to settle with papa and mamma about asking you to pay us that good long visit which something has always cropped up to prevent your doing these years past. They are delighted at the prospect, and hope you will come at once, and stay as long as you can endure the hugger-mugger and confusion. One advantage our present abode possesses over its numerous predecessors. It is tumble-down, rat-infected, dirty, dingy, hideous, and haunted; but, it is roomy. Even we cannot fill it. We are like articles in a half-packed box, and rattle about for want of padding. The room I destined for you looks upon the great wilderness of a garden, and the only approach to it is through my own, so you will have a faithful sentinel to protect you nightly against all marauders, infantine, ghostly, or otherwise. We got the place for a song, because the burglars have so often patronized it; papa says he has the true secret of keeping them away-electroplate! simple, is it not? So, dearest Bertha, mind, come you must and shall. To save yourself all trouble about making up your little mind, write at once and 'name the happy day,' and let it not be later than the beginning of next week. Not that I can wait so long to talk to you, I have so much to say. I would not write from the Vale of the Chelt, because I hate talking to a pal like you—especially on paper—of a thing that is not settled, at least when that thing may have to become a torn-out page of one's life. Well, now I have got back, the whole matter is as far from being arranged as ever, so I plunge into ink and confidence, and lay the whole vexed business before you.

"It is about a young man, if indeed that vulgar term may apply to such an exquisite as the Hon. Felix (I like the name of Felix, don't you, my dear? It is so much less common than Charles and George and all those) Elton. Stop, I must write it all together. Hon. Felix Elton. Does it not look nice? Well, Tom brought him; they have known each other for ages. Tom brought him to one of our awful parties, and we seem to have fallen in love with each other directly. Of course he was the first to show he was touched; the first to be nice to me, but I made no resistance, for I thought him simply charming, and do still; so would you. Bertha, if you do not say he was perfect I will do you some grievous bodily harm!

I wonder what I shall call him if ever I'm his wife?

"Felix sounds so 'stand off!' doesn't it? But one couldn't say Felixy. Well, that isn't the chief difficulty, as you may suppose. He is Lord Harborough's brother, and very rich, and the only obstacle is that he is too grand for us, and he knows it. Oh, not the least fine. It's so difficult to explain. He proposed for me to papa, and told him at once that he didn't want to marry the family. And

the family, including me, don't know what to make of this.

"Felix—I mean Mr. Elton—says you can't mix sets. I suppose he knows, but I do not understand it quite. The worst of it is, he keeps writing to papa for our united answer about the point, and says in every letter that if we won't agree to it the marriage is out of the question, and if I am not to be his he would much rather not see me again, as he is already too fond of me. Mamma is dreadfully annoyed at his way of going on. She says if he and I were

thrown a good deal together I could make him so in love he would agree to anything. Of course, Mr. Elton does not want to separate me from them quite, but he wants to put it out of their heads that through us they can become part of the great world. Mamma says people will suspect there is something awful against them if Mr. Elton, after marrying me, keeps them in the background. Of course, all I can do is to wait and leave the answer to papa and mamma. There is no merit in this, as it would be useless and absurd to do anything else. Still, I never thought that a girl who was the least bit nice could be so in love with a man she only saw

"To be sure, we talked for at least an hour, and then—well, I never saw anyone like him before, and don't believe such another

exists; but I will write no more, as I am to see you so soon.

"Dearest Bertha, "Your loving "ANGEY TRAMBERLEY."

All Bertha's interest and warm affection for her friend was thoroughly awakened by the time she had come to the end of this gushing missive, and crushing it into the pocket of her dressing-gown as she thought she heard Lady Muriel coming up the stairs—
"I will go to Barrack Grange," she said very decidedly

CHAPTER XVIII.

COME BACK.

PATTY'S cry of delight when she saw Max Schippheim checked a reproof which he had come prepared to utter, and made his usually grave though kind face become suddenly radiant with smiles as the girl exclaim-

" My best friend, it will be all right now you have come

back." "I returned last night," he said, "and I have walked over here this afternoon to inquire the meaning

She would not let him finish the sentence.

"Please don't believe a word they've told you, sir. I have done nothing as you said I wasn't to do. I couldn't help Joe and Mounseer coming to blows and there being a row in the quadrangle. I didn't ask 'em to do it, and I'm very sorry as they did," and Patty began to cry.

Max Schippheim, like most men, especially of his type,

could not bear to see a pretty girl in tears.

He took her hand kindly.

"Don't cry, my lass. I haven't said it was your fault, have I?"

"No, sir; you're much too good to me, but I know you must think me vile and bad because all this has happened, but I couldn't help it, indeed I couldn't. Lady Muriel thinks it's me, and that I'm a bad hussy, which I ain't, and Mr. Alston have told Mr. Andrews to send me away; but I can't help it, indeed I can't, and I said as soon as ever you came home I'd tell you the truth straight off. And Joe, he has gone and no one don't know where he is, and I almost hope he won't never come back no more, and Mrs. Bligh she's took me in just for a little peace and quiet, and Granny, she have left me a little money which is in the bank, and please, sir, perhaps you'll get it out for me, and I'll set up in the washing line for a bit, and I don't want to go back among they people as don't believe in me."

Patty, in her excitement was not quite as particular about her English as she had been trying to be of late, but Mr. Schippheim did not attempt to check this spontaneous outpouring of a young heart which gushed forth in one unchecked torrent at the sight of him. He led her toward a felled tree which lay not far off, on which he made her sit down beside him as he said kindly—

"My poor little Patty, you seem to have passed through

a great deal of trouble since I left home."

So the lecture he had been preparing all the way as he walked from Arundale had melted into half-a-dozen sympathetic words, the kindness in the tone of which made Patty's tears break forth anew. Kindness always softened and subdued Patty's character, while harshness only served to render her hard and unbending.

"Don't cry, my child. Now I have come back I will see if something cannot be done to make you happy and

comfortable."

"Oh, I shall be happy enough now you're come home, if you only say you don't think as I was to blame; it's that as has been worrying me, the thought as you'd be angry,"

and Patty dried her eyes with the corner of her apron, and looked at him with a sweet, ingenuous face, from which he felt desperately inclined to kiss away the tear-stains, only he remembered just in time that he was the senior partner, and that this little girl, sweet and beautiful though she was, was only a discharged gold-burnisher. His next thought was—what did that matter, if he liked her? The necessity of class distinctions, except so far as they were imperative for keeping up discipline and organization in his works, formed no part of Max Schippheim's creed.

He came of the people himself, he was wont to say, and one man was as good as another if he had the same amount of brains.

Whether brains or beauty were the requisite quality in a woman, he had hitherto scarcely troubled to inquire, but assuredly, to watch the light in his eyes as he looked at Patty, it would seem that in this instance, at all events,

he fully recognized the magic power of beauty.

He did not kiss her, however; by the time he had argued the matter out with himself, the opportunity had passed for the moment, and he did not feel inclined to force it. He merely assured her that he was not angry with her, though very much annoyed that there had been so much trouble and turmoil during his absence, and then he got on to safer ground, asking her what money her Granny had left, and what she proposed to do with it, seeming, too, quite to concar in her idea that a portion of it should be placed at Mrs. Bligh's disposal, and that she should join that good woman as partner in the Daleford Laundry, which was a tolerably flourishing concern.

"And some day, I suppose, you will marry Joe Marks," said Mr. Schippheim, after he had fully discussed the money question, and told Patty to bring him the necessary papers to the works on Monday morning. About coming into Arundale she rather rebelled, but she was told it was absurd to mind it now that he was there to silence insolent tengues. Curious how seldom men see that their interference usually only serves to heighten the pitch to which

gossip has already attained.

Patty's dislike to returning to Arundale was, however, not expressed by any means in such unmistakable terms as those she used to disclaim all intention of ever marry-

ing Joe Marks. To think that Mr. Schippheim should consider Joe a fitting match for her seemed to cut her to the very quick, rather to the amusement of the senior partner, who seemed scarcely to be as sorry for having annoyed her as the circumstances might have been supposed to warrant. This time taking her hand and raising it to his lips, he assured her she should marry no one she did not care for. Either Max Schippheim was very shy or he was thoroughly unused to women, for he had not the faintest idea of taking a citadel by storm—a fact about which Patty's astonished face might have told him something. She had never had her hand kissed in her life before, and, for a moment she almost thought she was a queen or a grand duchess.

Max Schippheim noticed nothing, however, he was too much taken aback by his own act of unwonted gallantry to think of her at that moment, and having brought the interview to what he considered this unprecedented climax,

he got up to go away.

Everything had turned out perfectly different from what he had intended and arranged, yet Mr. Schippheim could not be said to be wholly dissatisfied with his evening's walk. The sight of Patty seemed to have refreshed him as a weary man is refreshed by a draught of sparkling wine, and having bestowed on her a few more kindly, almost affectionate words, he went on his way, humming softly to himself in the exuberance of sheer animal spirits as he walked along—never, so taken up was he with his own satisfied thoughts, turning back once to look at Patty. Hence he failed to discover that she did not stir from the seat where he had left her, but sat on, gazing after him with wide open wistful eyes.

"Marry Joe!" she repeated two or three times after he was out of sight, as though she were thinking the matter over from all its varied bearings. "No, never with my free will do I marry Joe; but if Mr. Schippheim wishes it—well, perhaps it won't much matter," and then she bowed her head down on her knees and sobbed as though

her heart would break.

A fresh vista seemed to have opened out for Patty that September evening, a vista, however, through which she could not see very clearly; shades were rising gradually over it on all sides like the shadows of night, which, lengthening as they did among the trees, reminded her, when she did at last look up, that it was time she was

getting back to the laundry.

It was five minutes of brisk walking from where Patty had been sitting to her new home: yet she took at least a quarter of an hour in getting there, so slowly did she wander along, so taken up was she by her own thoughts. When she arrived at the door, Elsie Bligh was standing by it.

She had been a true friend to Patty, yet Patty did not care to see her now; she did not feel as if she wanted the sort of spell Max Schippheim's presence had cast over her

to be broken.

"It is news as I've brought, Patty," shouted the younger girl, when she saw the loiterer; "hurry along, for I'll have to be getting back."

"I know your news," answered Patty, a little shortly;

"the master is back."

"Oh, that's no news, since I seed him talking to you. I've other news besides that."

"Well!"

"Joe Marks was in Arundale to-day."

"Humph!"

What cared Patty to hear about Joe Marks?

You don't seem as pleased as ye might be. Joe's in clover, too. He's gotten a place at Belton."

"I hope he'll keep it. Whatever has he come over to

Arundale for to make fresh disputes?"

"I think he was a bit pining for the sight o' you. He seemed disappointed loike when he found as you was gone."

"Did you tell him where I was?"

"No; you bidden me not, and he never asked me; belike he didn't think I knowed."

"Never know anything, Elsie, and you'll make a wise

woman."

At no time was Patty Urske's superiority so apparent as when she was in the society of girls like Elsie Bligh; she spoke better English than they did, came of a better race, and was not altogether displeased to give them many a word of advice. Elsie Bligh looked up to Patty as to a being belonging to quite a different sphere to herself, so thoroughly is everything a matter of degree in this world.

"I waur a bit sorry for Joe, though he has gotten place," she went on; "he didn't seem to have no spirit when the fellows about jeered on at him, and said as he'd

driven you out of Arundale."

"Well, so he did. If he'd left matters quiet they'd have been quiet, and no harm done to nobody, and now that he's got them into a fix I wonder he don't stop at Belton and leave the Arundale folk alone. There'll be another row between him and the Mounseer if they come across each other."

"I'm sure and I hope not, though Joe is going to stop at Mother Marks' till the Sabbath night. She's right

pleased at having him there, I warrant.'

"Fools both of them," broke in Patty. "That Brumeau is a vindictive spirit. He'll be even with Joe afore he has done. What's he been about of late? Has he got

over his hiding?"

"Oh, he's gotten rid of his black eyes this some time past and he's quite master over Mr. Alston and Andrews. Now the real governor's come back, we'll see where the Frenchman's place will be—nowhere if I was governor. I'd put you and Joe back where you was, and have no more of this furrineering nonsense."

"I wouldn't go back," said Patty, with a little toss of

her head.

"Lor"! The grapes is sour, they is."

"Not a bit of it. I'm going to stop on here with your mother; the work suits me. I like ironing, it's clean and dainty."

"You be half a lady, you be, Patty."

"Perhaps I shall be a whole one before I die."

"My eye! How queer it must be to feel as you do. I should like to be you for half-an-hour."

Patty gave a sad smile.

"Don't wish it, Elsie, it won't bring you no good. Best get back to Arundale, lass, before the night sets in, or we shall be having a fight about you next."

"I ain't gotten your eyes, Patty, nor yet your Joe; but still I think I'll be going; mother thinks I'm half-way.

Good-night. I'll let you know what's going on."

"Mayhap I'll be in Arundale myself on Monday, only don't tell anyone I'm coming."

"You?"

"Yes: you don't think I'm going to be buried in Daleford for life, because Joe Marks and Mounseer choose to fight. The master's come back; he'll square them," and Patty threw up her head with a proud toss which was well known by factory workers.

For a second or two Elsie stood staring, as though sur-

prise had made her dumb, then she said:

"Well, you bean't easy to understand; first you will and then you won't. Howsomever, I'll keep my tongue between my teeth, else p'r'aps Joe will be breakin' some head as won't mend quite so quick as the Frenchman's."

"All right, Elsie, you just keep the right side of Joe; there's no saying what may come of it. I won't stand in

your light, my girl."

It was too dark by this time for Patty to see the crimson color that rose to the very roots of Elsie's hair; she had formed a sort of guess that Elsie had a liking for Joe, and felt inclined to do all in her power to foster it, fearing, however, at the same time, that there would be trouble and sorrow for her in the future, since Joe scarcely seemed inclined to recognize the fact that Elsie existed at all.

Before the usual pallid tint had returned to Elsie's face, she was already half-a-mile down the lane, speeding on her way to Arundale. Patty had not conjectured wrongly in imagining that Elsie would rather have had Joe Marks for a sweetheart than any other fellow in Arundale; still she did not possess any of Patty's strong characteristics. She would never make a desperate struggle for any object she wished to obtain, but would rather skulk away into some corner where, unseen, she would cry her pretty eyes out, because nature and occasion were both combined against her. Elsie's was one of those colorless temperaments that always want a stronger character to lean on; hence chiefly her clinging to Patty with a sort of dog-like fidelity.

CHAPTER XIX.

MY INTENDED WIFE.

All through Sunday, when Patty had nothing to do but wander about the little wood or sit gazing at the stream near which the laundry was situated, not a breath of Arundale news reached her, and such a longing came upon her to see the old place again that she quite looked forward to going down to the works with her papers on the morrow. The very expectation that the sight of her might create a tumult excited her, and she began to regard as a pleasant prospect what a few hours before she had almost feared.

Sunday was a very long day at Daleford.

Patty was not a strict church-goer, and had never ventured into Daleford Church because she did not wish to meet either Lady Muriel or Mr. Alston. For the same reason she had not gone up to the House to inquire after Miss Yorke, though Captain Christian had called at the laundry on the previous evening to know if she was still there, and they had subsequently heard of the accident which had lamed her.

But if Patty herself had kept in the background, all the Bligh family had made an expedition to Dale House the object of their Sunday afternoon's walk, thus leaving Patty quite alone and making time hang even heavier on hand than it usually did when the children, who were four in number and all younger than Elsie, were chattering and romping all over the place. No wonder, then, that Patty was glad when the Sunday was over, finishing as it did, too, with anything but a good account of Bertha Yorke.

When the fresh, bright Monday morning broke gladly over hill and dell, she got up, and donning her best attire, she started, her bundle of papers under her arm, for her interview with Max Schippheim in his little private sanctum in the factory. She had been quite right in suspecting that her appearance in Arundale after all that had taken place would not pass without something more than mere comment.

Everyone was more or less on the alert when it became

bruited through the works that Patty Urske had reappeared in Arundale, and even in the artists' room there were whispered conversations going on which showed the intelligence had absolutely penetrated into the upper circles.

The daring impertinence, too, with which it was presumed she intruded into the master's private room to give, without doubt, her own version of what had happened filled more than one honest breast with indignation, and so utterly was Patty's behavior misconstrued, so severely censured, that when, some half-an-hour later, she came out of Max Schippheim's room, her pretty face basking in the pleasant smile a successful interview leaves on the countenance, the few old associates she met—for it was still working hours and the "hands" were nearly all indoors—returned her gracious salutations with either a howl of disproval or with no visible response whatever.

But Patty was in no mood to be annoyed; she was back in Arundale, the master was satisfied with her and had made her the happiest of girls; what need she care for

the opinion of these people.

She lostered along at the back of the manufactory, where there was a pretty view of Daleford and the Alston's house in the distance, its smoke curling about green trees at the base. As the ruddy September sun shone on the fair scene, of which perhaps, not the least fair particular was bright-eyed, sonsy-faced Patty herself, she attracted the attention of a man who was watching her as she dawdled along in the old familiar haunts.

Ah, Patty had been rash when she retraced her footsteps, for the man who was watching her was none other than Paul Brumeau, who, from not having feasted his eyes on the little beauty he so much admired for a long time, was all the more ready to devour her with passion-

ate glances now.

Paul Brumeau had not seen Patty since he received that drubbing from Joe Marks, and now his black eyes were nearly well; the remembrance of it exasperated him, however, since Joe had passed out of his reach, for somehow, M. Brumeau had heard nothing of Joe's visit to Arundale; so he thought he would have his revenge on Patty.

He would force her to love him; he would tell her she

should be reinstated at Arundale, not as a mere gold burnisher but as a veritable artist if she would consent to accept his love. He would devote his life to teaching her his own art, and with such a sense of beauty of form as she possessed, it would be strange if she could not produce some exquisite specimens of artistic excellence. Later he would take her back with him to his own France, where his English lily should blossom with peerless sweetness among the more gorgeous flowers of his own land. With such a tirade as this, uttered in the strangest English and the wildest glances issuing from his fiery eyes, Paul Brumeau made a descent on Patty as she stood dreaming of the future, which at that moment seemed well nigh as sun-lit to her mental vision as the landscape on which her gaze rested.

She awoke with a start when M. Brumeau's words first reached her, and a feeling of heat came over her as though a scorching furnace had suddenly been lighted at her side. She did not attempt to answer him for some seconds, but stood looking at him with wide open, wondering eyes, as though she did not know whether to be angry

or amused by the intrusion.

When she did speak her first sentence was a thorough bathos as compared with his rush of fierce, romantic passion.

"What a blessed jargon," she said; "whatever's it all

about?"

"About you, my beautiful pet; you will wid me to my France go, where they will you worship as a Sainte Madonna of beauty as you are."

"Lor!" cried Patty, bursting out laughing; "are you

taken mad all of a sudden, mounseer?"

"Mad! yes, with the love, the passion of my beautiful, my adorable Patty," answered Brumeau, as he tried to clasp her in his arms,

She eluded him, however, by a sudden bound, as she

said, still laughing-

"Your adorable Patty! Don't appropriate what ain't yours.

"'Him who prigs what isn't his'n, Must expect to go to prison.'"

But Patty's frisky, almost playful vein only served to make Paul Brumeau more keen. He whirled his little body rapidly round and caught her in his arms before she had time to get out of his way a second time. Foiled, she grew really angry, and with her left hand, for he seized her right, she caught him such a blow on the side of the head that for a moment he was well nigh stunned. This daughter of the people would soon teach him that even in the absence of her champion, Joe, she was very capable of taking care of herself.

"Just you learn to keep your hands to yourself, and don't let 'em interfere with me," said Patty, speaking very roughly and brusquely in her indignation; "talk as much confounded rubbish as that crazy tongue of yours can string together; it don't hurt no one but yerself that it gets laughed at, but no fingering, if you please; I won't

stand it."

"You are vixen—devil!" ejaculated Brumeau so furious that it was with difficulty he could manage to pronounce any words at all.

"Yes," she said, "every one in Arundale knows that; pity you did not learn it before. It might have saved

you a few bruises."

"I will quell your proud spirit, méchante que vous êtes. I will toss you to my feet. Mon Dieu! on ne dira jamais que moi, Paul Brumeau, have been vaincu par une femme."

"That's your lingo, is it," cried Patty, irritatingly. "Well, you'd best talk it always, because it saves understanding, and I don't want to know nothing about you nor your talk."

"But you will-you shall-you shall be my beautiful

flower."

"Stuck in your button-hole when you go holiday-making, I suppose. Look you here, Mounseer Brumeau, let's have no more of your philandering or it will be worse for you. You've gotten me into more trouble than I care about as it is, and if you don't just keep yourself to yourself and leave off a follering me up you'll find out when it is too late that an English work girl can make two of a dirty little furrineer like you."

"You dare talk to me comme ça! You dare? Savez vous que je suis Paul Brumeau, le grand dessineur, et

que I will of you complain to the master."

"I ain't got no master. I am a free and independent

subject, and ready to duck you in that shining river down there the very next time you give me any more of this nonsense."

"But Mr. Schippheim is tout puissant; he will turn you from Arundale if I tell him what a bad, cruel, lying girl you are."

"Will he? we shall see, and as here he is, state your

case at once."

It was true, a few paces behind Paul Brumeau stood Max, who had just come out of the works by a little side door.

The designer turned round and faced him, dismay written on his countenance. What had the great Schippheim seen or heard of the scene, which was by no means to M. Brumeau's credit? He did not say how much he knew; he only expressed a wish in somewhat spurious German French, which of course Patty did not understand, that M. Brumeau would seek another appointment as designer since the Arundale works were no longer in need of his services. The little Frenchman seemed petrified and did not attempt to reply, but Patty began to tell the master what had happened.

He would have no parley, however, on the subject.

"I have seen and heard it all. Run home to Daleford, child, and do not come into Arundale again until I give you leave—then let Mr. Paul Brumeau and every one else take care how they interfere with my intended wife."

CHAPTER XX.

THE BANS.

THERE had been something in Bertha's face of late which had seemed a sort of reproach to Lady Muriel. She did not know what the girl had absolutely discovered; still she could not divest herself of the impression that she knew something, and she was, therefore, greatly relieved when Bertha, having accepted Angey Tramberley's invitation, had started for Richmond.

Once alone, however, and minus the nursing and the worry of Bertha's illness, Lady Muriel had ample time to devote her thoughts to the absent Christian, and that she

did do so, almost to the extinction of every other subject, there is little doubt.

Christian, whose letters used to be so frequent that if she had not wisely burnt them they would have filled boxes, now never wrote at all. He had only sent one or two curt epistles when Bertha was ill and he first left

Arundale, and, since then, utter silence.

For a time Lady Muriel was irritated to the degree of making herself most disagreeable to every one with whom she came in contact; even little Eric cried to go to his nurse whenever he was left alone with his mother. Then the phase of her feeling seemed to change, and Lady Muriel became a victim to fits of the most abject despondency, which, for the time, seemed to check all her usual activity of mind.

Illicit though it was, she had a fervent, deeply-rooted affection for Christian, there is little doubt; scarcely had she even recognized the depth of it herself till she found herself as it were, deserted by him and left in solitude to ponder over the happy days that might have been had she not elected to divide her homage at the shrines of

Plutus and Cupid.

She lost her sleep by night, her peace by day, and was beginning to look so thin and haggard that even Mr. Alston noticed it and grumbled that he had no sooner got rid of one invalid out of the house than it seemed he was to be burdened with another.

Matters of late have by no means tended to put Her-

bert Alston in a good temper.

In the factory everything is, as he describes it, at sixes and sevens since it was given out that Max Schippheim intended to marry that little pauper drab, and what lunacy had possessed the senior partner when he decided on such a step he could not for the life of him conceive. One very certain thing was, that if such an ill-assorted marriage ever did take place, they might as well close the Arundale Works forthwith, for there would be no managing the people: they were in a state of slumbering insubordination now.

"And this does not suit my pocket, Muriel. We shall be paupers, d'ye hear, if this tomfoolery is allowed to go on."

This last sentence was the invariable refrain of all

Herbert Alston's many growls to his wife on the subject of Max Schippheim's intentions toward Patty; the curious part of the affair being that she who had been so keen in stopping this marriage, now seemed perfectly indifferent as to whether it took place or not, while Mr. Alston was keenly alive to the fact that such an alliance would be

most injurious to the interests of the business.

That his wife would have seen this as clearly as he did, and have helped him in her powerful way to arrest its completion and their utter ruin, he had fondly hoped; but he was mistaken. Lady Muriel apparently perceived none of the personal inconveniences that would arise from Mr. Schippheim's marriage with Patty, or, if she did perceive them, was utterly indifferent on the subject, and all Herbert Alston could say would not arouse her.

The fact was, all her thoughts were engrossed in contemplation of the strange behavior of the absent Christian, and she never attempted to divert them to any other subject. She felt too utterly inert and really ill to exercise either her mind or body over outside matters, and she spent hours lying on a sofa in the little boudoir, reading,

or pretending to read some artistic work.

No wonder Herbert Alston gazed in wonder at his wife, and, at times, had serious thoughts of sending to London for first-rate advice. All this while Paul Brumeau had not left Arundale. By the terms of his agreement, he was to have three months' notice before departure, and not much more than as many weeks had passed since the morning Max Schippheim came suddenly upon him and Patty. Paul Brumeau did not wish to leave Arundale. The position he held there suited him; the pay suited him, and, moreover, he basked in the favor of the lady at Dale House. He had been carried away into the commission of a foolish act by the impression Patty's beauty had made on him, but he saw his mistake, and, like a clever man, from the moment he saw it, he set himself, if possible, to repair it.

The modus operandi to effect this was, he decided, as utter and entire an obliteration of himself as was possible, never allowing himself to be either seen or heard when he could help it. Of course he went into the painting-room at the works and gave his lessons and drew his masterly designs; but out of hours he became a cipher; he inter-

fered with no one, never went near Dale House, and consequently had not had one conversation with Lady Muriel since Max Schippheim's marriage had been announced. In this general defacing of himself, of course Paul Brumeau came as little as possible in contact with the great senior partner; in fact, whenever business absolutely necessitated an interview with either partner, he was so obsequiously reserved and humble, that if they had taken his manner into consideration at all they must have de-

cided that he was acting a part.

But no one gave him and his object in life a thought and the days passed rapidly on in seeming placidity; still there existed that half latent spirit of dissatisfaction and disaffection of which every one was sensible, though no one alluded to it except Herbert Alston in his private conversation with his wife. Patty stayed at Daleford, patiently working with Mrs. Bligh and meeting the master occasionally by the mill: it seemed as if she too had a desire to efface herself from the recollection of the people of Arundale. But then, of course, some day she expected to burst on them in fuller radiance.

"The bans are to be published next Sunday! next Sunday, d'ye hear, Muriel?" Mr. Alston announced to his wife one day when he came home from the works to

luncheon.

"Whose bans?" she asked, languidly.

"Whose bans? how can you put such a question? why that old fool Schippheim, of course, with the little hussy at Daleford. I am sure I have talked to you about it."

Lady Muriel got up from the sofa on which she was

lounging.

"Indeed! so soon! I thought it was all a philandering

and a joke."

"You never do believe what I tell you. You always think what I say is a joke. How you can stare me in the face in that cool fashion I can't conceive, especially when our ruin embraces your dear friend Christian. I had a letter from him this very morning in which he says: 'I am sorry to hear that my uncle Max is still bent on this foolish infatuation which is such a blow to all my prospects. I might as well tie a mill-stone about my neck and jump into the sea.'"

"Christian wrote to you? Christian said this?"

"Ah-I thought a reference to Christian's ruin would wake you up, while about mine you do not seem to care a pin."

"Perhaps I do not altogether see how you are so much affected by Mr. Schippheim's marriage. Give me Chris-

tian's letter."

He threw it rather at than to her, and watched her

keenly while she read it with avidity.

Lady Muriel had not seen Christian's writing for so long she drank it in as a thirsty man drinks a cup of water after a three days' drought. Except by the deepening color on her pale cheeks she showed, however, no signs of emotion; she was composed and dignified as usual.

"You are right; something must be done," she said, "but what, it will require time and reflection to decide."

"At last, then, you mean to take the matter up. you had done so weeks ago, brought some of your plausibility to bear on Schippheim, you would have stopped it without all this d——d delay."

"Don't talk nonsense, Herbert, and don't swear before me. I hate it. My talking to old Max would have been useless; no man who is in love ever listens to warnings. Something more startling, more dramatic, must be brought to bear on the case than mere talk."

"What do you suggest should be done?"

"Nothing, except that you should leave me alone to work out the affair my own way."

"Which means, I suppose, that I am a driveling idiot,

and not capable of offering a suggestion?"

"Nothing of the kind; most probably your assistance will be very valuable, only I should suggest that, as Max Schippheim's partner, you should keep in the background and do what you are told blindly. It may save future disputes."

Lady Muriel had as yet formed no plan de guerre; this distancing of Mr. Alston from her project was solely with the view of giving herself wider and freer range of

Some one calling him away on business at this period of their conversation, she lay back on her sofa once more, and fell to thinking.

Lady Muriel's cogitations did not give rise to any extravagant piece of energy. She simply rang the bell and ordered the pony-carriage in which she habitually drove herself, but which, owing to the state of her feelings and her health, she had not used for nearly a fortnight.

It was a soft, balmy afternoon, and the air seemed to revive her. She felt more like her old self as she drove Robin at a brisk trot along the lanes toward Daleford,

than she had done for weeks.

It was the prettiest drive in the neighborhood, but it was not altogether the beauty of the scene that influenced Lady Muriel; she had an object in view. She was going to see Patty, to try her powers upon her, to seek to mesmerize this girl into obeying her wishes. She did not in the least expect to succeed, but if she did not, well, then, something else of a far more desperate nature that she was arranging in her brain must be tried.

When she got about half way to Daleford the pony stopped very suddenly, though usually quiet and well be-

haved, and began to kick violently.

There was a man lounging under a tree close by, smoking a short pipe; coming quickly round a corner and seeing this man lying there, had evidently frightened Master Robin, and it was some seconds before even the sound of Lady Muriel's voice could quiet his vagaries.

By the time he had decided to stand quietly, the man was at his head. Lady Muriel looked at him and recog-

nized him at once.

"Joe Marks!" she exclaimed, "I thought you had left these parts for good."

"I've got work at Belton, my lady."

"Then what are you doing lying under a tree at Daleford?"

"'Cos, my lady, I likes sometimes to have a look at the

old place. I has friends here."

"Friends!" and Lady Muriel laughed. "You seem to be enjoying solitude, I should have said."

The pleasantness of her ladyship's manner inspired him

with confidence.

"It's 'cos I've lost a friend as I was there all alone," he said, hanging down his head.

"Indeed! Who is dead in Arundale?"

"Not dead, my lady. That is, only to me; but marriage is death to some folks, if it is life to others." "Do you mean Patty Urske?"

"Ay, my lady. Her as is going to marry the master. I didn't believe one word of it till I asked her myself, and—"

"Well, my man, what did she say?"

"She flouted me i' the very face, and told me to go back to work and mind my business; when she was mistress she'd have no ne'er-do-weel idlers about the place."

"When she is mistress!" and Lady Muriel's lip curled, and there was a strong sneer in her voice as she repeated the phrase. "Patty will not be mistress at Arundale if Mr. Schippheim's friends can prevent it. He must be mad to contemplate such a step, and, treating it as the action of a madman, we shall do our best to prevent it."

"It's high time then as something was done. They is

to be asked in the church to-morrow."

"You might run away with Patty," suggested Lady

Muriel, in a half-jocular tone.

"Lor', bless your ladyship, she wouldn't run an inch, and if I took her by force, I'd only have the master down on me to take her back again; besides, I don't want no woman as don't want me. I may make myself unhappy-like without her, but I'd be unhappier if I had her tied moaning and grumbling to my coat-tail."

"Then you are resolved to give her up, be wretched for a little while, then get over it and forget her. You are a

sorry lover, Joe Marks."

"Well, my lady, I am a man, and, I hope, an honest one, but I ain't gotten grand folks' views o' lookin' at things. What would you have me to do?"

"Stick to the girl you love, of course, and try to rescue her from the misery she will bring on herself by passing

into a sphere of which she knows nothing."

"Sphere!" muttered Joe, repeating the word once or twice as though its meaning puzzled him. "No, Patty don't know nothing about spheres," he then gave as his decided opinion, amusing Lady Muriel in spite of herself; for, all things taken into consideration, she was in no mood to be amused.

She answered him in the same tone, however.

"Such being the case, why don't you prevent her from being thrust into them? They will only be her destruction."

"Can't help it, my lady. Patty is perverse, and if I said to her, 'Patty, her ladyship says as spheres is dangerous, and you'll get among 'em if you has to do with this yere marriage,' she'd only say, 'Let me alone, Joe, I can take care of myself, and I likes a turn now and agen at a new experience.' No, please, my lady, I'd sooner leave Patty alone."

"But if Patty were free you would marry her?"

"Yes, my lady, if she wished it; not that she'll ever wish it as long as the master's above ground."

"Do you think it would be of any use for me to go and

see Patty, and have a talk with her?"

Joe shook his head.

"You could as likely hoist up that there great elm tree and carry it on your shoulder to the house, as move Patty when her mind is set. Words most sets it all the firmer."

"Then you think it would be wiser to leave Patty

alone?"

"If you can't make no way with the master, you won't with Patty. She won't be coaxed and she won't be bribed and she won't be druv. She has her own way allers."

"A nice account you give of the girl you love," said Lady Muriel, laughing; "still, somehow, this marriage must be stopped, Joe."

"I'm willin'," he answered, "but I don't see my way to it."

"Neither do I altogether; however, I'll take counsel. Only tell me, Joe, may I count on you to marry Patty if this stupid business is put a stop to?"

"Ay, if she's willing."

"She will be willing enough if she's once free of Mr. Schippheim; it is only this nonsense that is keeping her from appreciating an honest young fellow like yourself. Here, Joe, is a sovereign to drink success to our endeavors. Keep a good heart, my man, and look forward to the day when you and Patty will have a snug little cottage in Arundale which I will furnish for you at my own cost."

"Thank you, my lady. Thank you hearty, I'll look

forrard and hope."

Meantime Lady Muriel turned the carriage round. Something in her conversation with Joe had evidently decided her not to go on to Daleford.

"Good morning, Joe—come up to the House in a few days if your master at Belton can spare you."

He watched her as she drove away.

"I wonder whatever she's going to be after," he muttered, "some devil's games, I'll warrant. She worrited till she got me drove out of Arundale, cos I meddled with her furrineer, and now she's as civil as though I was her best friend."

Lady Muriel, however, was soon out of sight. About half-a-mile further on she arrived at four cross roads. Instead of taking the turning back to Dale House, she drove down into Arundale. Was she going to try her blandish-

ments on the senior partner himself?

Whatever was the business that took her into Arundale that day, when she returned home some two hours later there was a fixed stern look on her face as of a woman who was resolved on determined action.

CHAPTER XXI.

BACK IN TIME.

THE sun was already fading out of sight behind the western hills, and flocculent masses of vapor floating about in mid-air heralded the approach of night before Lady Muriel drove home from Arundale. Whom she had seen there, what she had done, she told no one; but there was the rigid expression of a fixed purpose on her features, making them look whiter if possible than usual, and very stony, as she drove on quickly in the semi-darkness.

For two hours an urchin to whom she had promised a shilling had held her pony in the street in front of the works, but no one remarked the occurrence. Lady Muriel so frequently went there to inspect the painting, &c., that though she stayed on this occasion much longer than usual, the fact attracted no attention. But Lady Muriel was not in the painting-room, nor did she have any interview with the senior partner, who had been seen, as was his wont, in every part of the building where he was least expected at various times during the afternoon: such a radiant, happy look on his face as no one among those

who had known him for years ever remembered to have noticed there before.

And days passed on. No immediate result seemed to be imminent from Lady Muriel's drive that afternoon; yet that something was about to happen might be rather felt than perceived. There was a sort of heavy luridness in the mental atmosphere; people in high quarters were observed standing about in corners and speaking in whispers. The sort of dead calm was apparent which invariably presages a storm, the only individual unconscious of its approach being the senior partner himself, who shone like a sun among all the gloom that surrounded him. The bans had been published in church for the second time, and he looked so happy, had been heard to hum sotto voce as he went about his daily avocations in the works, and some of the hands even asserted that they had heard him whistling in the quadrangle.

Meanwhile Patty never appeared in Arundale, but was supposed to be living in peaceful, blissful repose at Mrs. Bligh's preparing her trousseau for the coming happy event. Preparing her trousseau she assuredly was, but as for the happiness she was experiencing at the same time

that, to all appearance, was infinitesimally small.

Not that she did not love the master. Patty loved him with her whole soul, and would have sacrificed her life for his, but the misery this love entailed on her was so great that at times she almost wished it had never existed at all. It seemed as though the whole of Arundale had risen against her as one Goliath, and that she was powerless in her humbleness and her weakness to make any stand.

True, she lived at Daleford, ands hould have been out of the reach of Arundale scandal, but its trumpet tongue made itself heard even in her retreat, and tormented her daily with its many insinuations against her virtue, the truth of the report that her Granny had left a

nest egg, &c., &c.

All these calumnious libels were torture to sensitive, upright Patty, the more so since she compelled herself to endure them in silence. She would not for worlds have told Max Schippheim what she was enduring. It would but have increased her own pain to have brought the blight of sorrow to his frank, glad eyes. And by some

happy chance he seemed to hear nothing; everyone was too afraid of the master to dare to hint at scandal to him; even Lady Muriel was too wary a diplomatist not to know that such a measure would but increase his determination to be true to Patty. But, aggravating though these false reports were which were so carefully repeated to Patty, the enforced hearing of them was by no means

the severest trial the poor girl had to endure.

Joe Marks, who had either given up his work in Belton, or it had given him up, was always loitering about the neighborhood—a pipe in his mouth, his hat on one side of his head, looking the very incarnation of abject despair. Patty was compelled to meet him occasionally, and when she did so the picture made her heart bleed. Poor Joe! he was a worthy fellow, only she could not love him. Would she ever have loved him, she wondered, if she had not met the master—her superb, god-like Max, for Max Schippheim was a god to Patty in the devotion and the reverence with which he inspired her.

Once or twice she had stopped to talk to Joe, expostulated kindly with him on the folly of his conduct, tried to make him believe how far happier he would be if he would seek to bestow on her more brotherly regard. But it was useless. Patty's gentle treatment only rendered the poor fellow more desperately, passionately in earnest, and moreover, she generally found that these interviews with Joe but served to heap coals of fire on her own head; for an account of them was sure to go the round of Arundale and at last return to her with many slanderous additions.

So she gave up speaking to Joe, since speaking was so useless and so dangerous, and when she met him, as now and again she was compelled to do under the greenwood tree, she only bestowed on him a passing nod or a cold good day, since she concluded Joe must talk of their meetings and conversations, else how could people know, and such disloyalty, from honest Patty's view of life, was a flagrant sin.

Wise though little Patty was, more sapient than most of her generation and her class, she had not discovered who the real delinquent was who was undermining her steps, poisoning the very atmosphere in which she dwelt.

Ah! It was a direful day for Patty when Paul Brumeau came over from the great sister manufactory at Sèvres.

The despairing love from which poor, suffering, impatient Joe was bowed down, to the extinction of all his work-a-day capabilities, was as nothing in comparison with the fierce, raging storm that Patty's sweet face and fair, rounded form had awakened in Paul Brumeau, rendered, too, as it was, ten times more furious by opposition which he felt himself to be well nigh powerless to overcome. Powerless, that is, by the old proverbial practices of love and war.

That the little Frenchman could condescend to meanness and baseness, those who knew him well in his own country would not have gainsaid. As it was, at Arundale no one but Lady Muriel and Max Schippheim were sufficiently intimately acquainted with his language to guage his character. To the latter he contrived as much as possible to remain a closed book—to the former—well, to the former—perhaps he had revealed more than for her own credit's sake she should have permitted. Nor when Max Schippheim did attempt to open the prettily bound book in which Paul Brumeau kept his sentiments, was he any the nearer an arrival at the real truth, since the page which was presented to him had invariably plausibility and flattery inscribed at its heading.

Ever since the evening that Max had come to Patty's rescue in the passage behind the works, and had given Brumeau his dismissal, the chief designer had been most

obsequiously civil.

It was evident he had some object in view in thus toadying the senior partner. Of course that magnate thought it was in order that his shortcomings might be overlooked, and he be permitted to retain his situation; and he smiles as he thinks of the littleness to which some men will condescend for an object, and supposes he must forgive him. Max Schippheim is so thoroughly happy he is ready to forgive all the world.

If he had questioned Patty very closely, she would, in all probability, have told him a very different tale; for she was sensibly alive to the fact that Brumeau had by no means given up his desperate admiration for herself, though even she could not realize what a snake in the

grass he was.

She never saw Paul Brumeau, which she did astonishingly often, considering how far out of Arundale she was living, that she did not, if possible, get out of his way; but on more than one occasion this had been so absolutely impossible that Patty had been compelled to hear what he

had to say.

Always the same tale, only sung in another strain; that is, a story of his devotion, mingled with his professions of admiration, congratulations that she is going to make such a splendid marriage, and regrets that he, being only a poor worm, had never any chance of winning her; but she, being in power now, must forgive him his past, and plead for him with the master that he may remain in their service.

Quick and sharp by nature, Patty, however, does not altogether fail to read between the lines of this man's cringing jargon; and each time after she has passed through an enforced interview with him, she writes him enemy in her mind.

Not that she fears him much; how should she when the arch-potentate of Arundale, the great Max himself is on her side. As his affianced bride, must not all the lesser

powers hide their abashed heads.

Still Patty's life was not altogether a pleasant one, and she scarcely knew whether she wished for or dreaded the day that was to transform her from humble Patty Urske into mistress at the great factory, and the hour was approaching very rapidly now. The bans had been published three times; the dresses and bonnets, though very simple and neat, yet superbly rich in Patty's modest eyes, were laid out to view in Mrs. Bligh's best bedroom.

White creamy silk made quite plainly, with a straw bonnet trimmed with lace of the same hue, was to be the bride's attire, while Elsie Bligh, in a blue cashmere, a present from Mr. Schippheim, was to be the only bride-

maid.

Simplicity and no unnecessary display was the senior partner's wish in connection with the marriage, which was to take place on Thursday morning, and no one contradicted a single wish. It seemed as though all Arundale was paralyzed with astonishment at there being any marriage at all; thus they had not a word to say either for or against it.

The people never for a moment took it into consideration that it was entirely their evil tongues which had impelled Mr. Schippheim into this marriage; at all events

with so much hurry.

From the House not a word was said in protest, but, then, except Lady Muriel, there was no one to protest. Mr. Alston had been in Birmingham for the last ten days on business in connection with the money defalcation and subsequent disappearance of one of the clerks, and Bertha Yorke was, as we know, at Richmond with the Tramberleys. Not that she would have interfered if she had been in her old home.

The reasons that might once have made her raise an opposing voice against Max Schippheim's marriage had ceased to exist.

On Lady Muriel's shoulders, then, did all the onus of opposition rest, and she carried the burden very lightly to judge by her actions; for she went on her usual way and did not testify to any interest in the affair one way or another.

Those who knew Lady Muriel well might have been astonished at her giving up her very determined objections to this marriage so easily; but, then, no one about Arundale knew how deeply rooted her objection was except her husband, and he was absent. Folks said he had gone away because he could not brook seeing the senior partner make a fool of himself; but they seldom discussed Lady Muriel's share in the general annoyance.

Meantime, Wednesday morning arrived, the day before the wedding was fixed to take place. The quaint old clock at the mill which had represented time to the country people for years past, pointed to thirty minutes past mid-day, when Elsie Bligh, breathless and all aglow from the speed with which she had run up from Arundale, stood on the threshold of her mother's cottage.

Patty was in the front room ironing some bits of lace

finery.

"Gracious, Elsie, why do you run like that? you'll make yourself quite ill; you are as red as fire," she exclaimed when she saw her friend.

"However you can keep cool," was the retort, "you

haven't heard the news, that's pretty clear."

"What news?" I've heard nothing."

Well, the master's gone away. Went away last night;

only took a hand bag with him, and no one knows where he has gone or when he is coming back."

Patty burst out laughing.

"You little silly, what's there in that to surprise you? He's gone on business, of course. He'll be back in plenty of time."

"Then you've heard from him?"

"I've heard nothing, but I know. You don't think as I'd go for to doubt the master?"

"Folks in Arundale thinks as it's very queer. They're

all standing in groups talking about it."

"Are they? Well, if they hadn't that to talk of they'd find something else. Tell them to mind their own business. I'm very sure of mine."

"Then you think Mr. Schippheim will really be back in time for the wedding to-morrow, and isn't trying to

cry off, as folk hints?"

"Elsie, how dare you? I'd like to choke you for such a supposition. The master is as sure to put in an appearance here at the right time to morrow as the sun is to rise."

Elsie hung her head as though abashed by Patty's faith, and felt sorry she had brought a suspicion to Daleford. But she need not have regretted her warning, for it did not seem to influence Patty, who went about the finishing up of her wedding preparations very joyously, a bright smile on her face, and a glad love carol in her voice.

The day passed without bringing any tidings of the senior partner, and the morrow broke in true festive beauty. The small wedding party assembled about half past ten o'clock at Daleford village church, where the bridegroom had decided his nuptials should be celebrated; but they waited there for him in vain. Neither that day, nor for many days to come, was anything heard of Max Schippheim.

CHAPTER XXII.

AT BARRACK GRANGE.

To be deafened and plagued by a pack of wild healthy children is one of the finest alteratives in the world.

To Bertha, coming as she did from a childless house,

it proved immensely beneficial. It was perhaps the last remedy she would have thought of, but, as is often the

case, it was the very one which suited her best.

Oh, what a relief it was, the bare escape from the sickly atmosphere of Arundale, where she had grown so weary of the sad, dull alternative,—alas, how many women will sympathize with her!—of rooting out her deep first love for Christian, or else struggling to keep it alive after she well

knew that its bloom, at any rate, was gone for ever.

This all-pervading theme monopolized and held her captive. Chase it away however resolutely Bertha might, it would return at the first vacant moment to tyrannize with renewed cruelty. Every scene where she had built up her love and her sweet hope was now impregnated with her late unwelcome discovery, and so dumbly eloquent of it that day or night she could dream of nothing else; and to flight alone could she look for even a partial cure.

Yes, in this little individual world of ours it is often

very good to be plagued.

Besides, if the Tramberleys were a little too much for the tenderly nurtured Bertha, she had her retreat in that wing of Barrack Grange, as their house was called, where she and Angela often locked themselves and reveled in quiet and mutual confidences. It has been said ad nauseam that in all human affection there is ever that inequality of degree which makes of one the lover, of the other the being who consents to be loved. In the present case, there is little doubt that Bertha's feeling for Angey was stronger than Angey's for her; yet, for all that, Angey loved her friend with a very real and deep devotion indeed.

It was a grievous trouble to Bertha at this time that she could not bare her soul in utter confidence as Angey did to her. Lady Muriel was, of course, the reason of this. To betray her even to the most trustworthy of confidentes, was a thousand times impossible to Bertha's loyal nature, but she did tell Angey plainly that she had loved, perhaps loved still, Captain Christian Meyer; but that she could not in honor, for the sake of others, relate to her certain events that had recently befallen. Besides these gentle communings of these two young girls, their days were pleasantly broken by little trips to town for shopping, or to see a friend, and once or twice an expedition to the play was duly organized; this being an effort, pecuniary

and otherwise, for the Tramberleys, provoking more discussion and squabbling almost than the thing was worth,

before it was carried into effect.

It was on one of these occasions that, during the entracte, Angey was startled by seeing her friend suddenly change color, and lean for support against the back of her chair. At first she thought that the heat, the gas, and, above all, the thrice-breathed breath, which make of our places of amusement (?) such temples of penance to many of us, had overcome Bertha, when the latter pressed her hand and whispered—

"It is nothing. Don't notice. I have just seen him,

and I think he saw me, and is coming here."

"Him! who? Oh, Captain Christian."
"Yes. Mind, if he comes, talk to him as much as you can. If you love me, Angey, talk to him. You will get me out of a dilemma, for—well, I can tell him nothing that he wants to know."

"But he will think me so tiresome, so devoid of tact,

so---'

"A sacrifice I claim. Men forgive anything to such a pretty girl as you are. I'll do as much for you some day, and— Hush, he is here.

As she spoke, the door of their box opened, and the ex-

pected one appeared.

"Bertha," he began, remaining outside, "may I come in? If you are, as I suppose, with your friend Mrs. Tramberley, of whom you so often speak to me, may I beg for an introduction?"

The three ladies were quite alone at the moment, their only cavalier, one of the schoolboys before mentioned who were never at school, being absent on a ginger beer-drinking expedition, and the two girls rose, while Bertha civilly though not warmly bade him enter, and forthwith presented him first to her chaperon and then to her friend. This little ceremony being gone through, Christian took possession of the fourth chair, and, as good breeding ordained, addressed himself to doing the agreeable to the mamma of his beloved's friend. And now a string of common-places ensued which there would be nothing but boredom in retailing. In three or four minutes, however, and having already made a favorable impression on the old lady, he jumped up and contrived a change rather

cleverly by a feigned anxiety to view the ceiling and other parts of the house from a different point to that of the stalls, exclaiming—

"A charming house, one must admit. This is one of the numerous new theaters, and I have not been here

before."

"When, Captain Meyer, is the craze for building new theaters to end?" asked Angey, mindful of her orders.

- "Well," said Christian, who rather plumed himself on his knowledge and perspicacity in matters theatrical, "not until the reign of opera bouffe declines. Then, I suspect, we shall see several London houses tenantless," and, as he spoke, he transferred his chair, as if out of sheer politeness to the questioner, to a vacant space between the two fair girls.
- "And what do you think will succeed to opera bouffe?" asked Bertha.
- "Well, any guess in that direction is, I hold, most hazardous, but that there will be a change of some sort before long, I believe, though who can dare to say in what direction fashion's caprice will betake itself?" Then changing the conversation—

"Have you heard lately from Lady Muriel, Bertha?"
A shade passed over Bertha's face as she replied—

"Not for a fortnight. I thought you would be more likely to give me news of her," she said, looking straight at him; he colored slightly as he answered—

"Oh, you know I left Arundale before you did, and Lady Muriel is a poor correspondent, except on business.

When do you think of returning?"

He put the question in a tender, earnest voice which spoke volumes; but she doubted his sincerity and said with great indifference—

"I've no idea. The fact is, I am so utterly happy with these dear friends of mine at Richmond, I don't think

just now of the future at all."

"Is she coquetting with me?" he thought. "This is

a new phase."

"Well," he said, "if we are not to meet there for a time, Richmond is not far off. Mrs. Tramberley, I hope you will allow me to canter down and visit you."

"By all means," said that motherly individual. "We

shall be enchanted. Pray come whenever you like; you

will always find luncheon on Sundays at two."

The Tramberley luncheon proper was not a meal to ask a stranger to take unawares. On the Sabbath the family dined at two. Hence the difference. Good Mrs. Tramberley knew nothing of the relations between Christian and Bertha, and at once saw in him a possible mate for her eldest.

Angey now inquired if he knew Richmond well. Involuntarily smiling at the simplicity of asking a Londoner such a question, he told her he thought he did, pretty well, but for all that would like to know it better.

"Strangely enough," he added, "I was there yester-

day."

"Indeed!"

"Yes," he said, half amusing; "I say strangely, because I was riding with a man—an old friend of mine—and I wanted to go to Wimbledon. He, on the contrary, asked so earnestly that we should turn our horses' heads toward Richmond I made sure he had an important call to make there."

"And had he?" asked Bertha.

"Nothing of the kind; so I couldn't make it out. Curious fellow is Elton."

Angey turned as white as ashes, and her friend, to save her confusion, hurriedly asked—

"Do you mean Mr. Felix Elton?"

"The same. We were at Harrow together. Not a bad fellow at all. But you don't know him, do you?"

"He is a friend of Mrs. Tramberley."

"Oh, indeed. He kept pottering about Richmond yesday, and looking right and left. I couldn't think what he was at, but as he volunteered no information and looked very grave and preoccupied, I thought—ha, ha!—that I would do the discreet and not question him."

"Perhaps," said worthy Mrs. Tramberley, "he was looking for Barrack Grange: that is the name of the little

place we have taken."

She did not in the least think so, but there was an awk-ward silence, and no more sensible remark occurred to her at the moment. She pitied poor Angey's blushes, and moreover, she thought it sounded well, as Elton was such a fashionable young man.

The curtain here rose upon the third act of "Fallen Fortunes," the play they were witnessing, and Christian profited by the diversion to say in Bertha's ear-

"Perhaps it will be I who shall ask Elton to take the

Richmond road next time. Shall I-may I?"

"I daresay Mrs. Tramberley will be very glad," she said, drawing herself up as though to discourage any further whisperings. One more little speech, however, he managed to convey to her sotto voce.

"I think you are very unkind to me this evening, and

—I shall think of it all night."

The school-boy now made an irruption into the box with an "I say, ma-" which was heard over half the house.

"Hush, Bobby, do," said his mother, turning scarlet. Christian rose, and as Bertha gave him her hand, she said-

"Unkind! I don't know what you mean. Good night!" And with a bow to the other ladies, and a vigorous shake-hands with the boy, with whom he waived the ceremony of an introduction, Christian left the box.
"Who's that?" said Bob before the door was closed.

"Hold your tongue!" said mamma with a tap which was half a slap, "will you never learn manners?"

"But he shook hands with me," pursued Bob in quite

an injured tone.

Nobody attended to him, however, so he was fain to do as the others and attend to the play.

But few words were said by the two girls till they found themselves tête-à-tête in their rooms at Barrack Grange.

Then confidence began in earnest till the bare walls of the almost paintless barn in which they lived echoed with the names of Elton and Christian.

That passing interview with Christian had re-awakened in Bertha's heart all the slumbering love for him which she had hoped was long since extinct. His soft whispers, his gentle manners, what could she do but think of them till the image of Lady Muriel stood gaunt and threatening before her mental vision; but of this image she dare not tell Angey, and to her friend's oft repeated questions as to why she dared not love Captain Meyer as much as she liked, the sole answer she could give her was that neither his relations nor hers would let them marry without money. And she would then draw the conversation from Christian to Felix Elton, who, from the little revelation that had been made, evidently had by no means given up caring for Angey, although he stood firm to his point that unless her family gave her to him utterly and entirely, he would not have her at all.

In another room that night was this subject discussed very freely—in the nuptial chamber of Papa and Mamma Tramberley, who came to the conclusion that if Elton was really as much in love as might be inferred from the anecdote related by Captain Meyer, it would be well to hold out a little longer; he would give in in the end, and an entrée into London society be secured for the rest of

their numerous offspring, male and female.

This point being decided to their satisfaction a long discussion followed as to what would be the best means of luring Christian Meyer to Barrack Grange for the eldest, an officer in Her Majesty's 300th Foot, quartered at Aldershot, being almost as important a person in Tramberley eyes as the great Felix Elton himself. Altogether things seemed to be looking up, they thought, and before they sought the aid of the Poppy god that night they further deceided that they would expend a little cash which they had not got, in making the house look more habitable and furnished, and that Mr. Tramberley should take the two girls into London for this purpose on the morrow. Of course they were compelled to select an expensive, and consequently, long-suffering shop in which to make their purchases, since ready money was an unheard of luxury.

When, after so many hours spent in plotting and chat, the elder members of the Tramberley family at last fell asleep, their slumbers were destined to be of short duration—the troop of unruly ones were up with the dawn, which broke, however, fortunately for the sleepers, nearer eight than seven, since with the awakening of the band they raced from one end of Barrack Grange to the other in their scanty night garments, shouting the, to them, welcome tidings of "Snow! Snow! What jolly snow balls we will make. Angey and Miss Yorke shall catch it, for isn't it snowing just! it is nearly up to the sashes of the

dining-room window already."

The children were right; the snow kept them thoroughly employed for days to come, but it put a stop to many

other projects and created such a substantial barrier between Richmond and London that they might have been hundreds of miles apart.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

SIXTEEN degrees of frost, and the snow piled up in smoke-blackened heaps all along the center of the principal London thoroughfares. In the by-streets no attempt had been made to remove it, and locomotion was well-nigh impossible. Hoar winter in its severest garb had taken the great Babylon by surprise, and notwithstanding all the scientific machinery it had at command, it would not recover its equilibrium.

Not for years had such a stoppage of all amenities of life been known; cabs did not ply for hire, even omnibuses had ceased running. Milk was not to be had at two shillings a quart, and people began to talk about the ordinary necessaries of existence running short; as for water, the house that possessed a well-filled cistern was besieged by the numerous possessors of frozen taps.

Such was the state of London on New Year's Eve. so recently as to make us wonder whether we were indeed surrounded by the modern appliances of this latter half of the nineteenth century, or whether we were still dwelling

in the unhelpful darkness of the Middle Ages.

New Year's Eve. Yes, the bell ringers had managed to get along the slippery, snow-drifted streets, and every church that had anything like a chime was awaking the

echoes with clamorous tintinnabulation.

In a small street leading out of Tottenham Court Road, there was a large out-of-repair, tumble-down-looking house let out in rooms to working people. The mistress of the house was respectable in her way: that is, she had veneered herself with respectability, and was always polishing the surface to let you see that it was bright, but the material that was underneath this outer coating was terrible rubbish. She never stole, or flagrantly defrauded, or did anything that could be taken hold of as blameful; still, with all her parade, if you were anything of a character reader you felt somehow instinctively that Mrs. Dobbs was not, in the ample sense of the word, an honest woman. She would wink at shortcomings in others, always saying she must exercise the spirit of Christian charity; never, however, finding the indulgence in this virtue the least necessary unless there were some pecuniary end to gain.

Her cunning ways, however, were successful in blinding a good many of the people whom she came across in life, amongst others, her relations, the Blighs, of Daleford. Mrs. Dobbs was own sister to Mrs. Bligh, though for the last ten years all communication between them had been reduced to occasional letters; still, Mrs. Bligh reverenced Sarah Dobbs; she had always reverenced her when they were children, Sarah being much the older; and it would have taken two archbishops and a martyr to make Mrs. Bligh believe that the contamination of a big city had, bit by bit, so depraved the elder sister that by means of a little religious smearing she could swallow any enormity. No one had ever been led into the belief that Dobbs was a good man; he was a hard drinker and a hard swearer; but he had been dead for years, and since his death Sarah had been most successful with her lodgers, and was considered by the Blighs to be thoroughly responsible and well-to-do. She keeps the parlor of the tumble-down house which she has bought, and can therefore repair or not, as she pleases, for herself. She is sitting there now, running her dirty forefinger, with its black-bordered nail, up rows of figures, the addition of which seems to perplex her not a little.

"Drat them bells, it's all along o' them as my head can't do it."

"Leave it till to-morrow, it's very late to-night to be bothering over accounts," said a voice issuing from a black heap, which at a first glance you would certainly not have taken for a human being, crouching on the hearthrug in front of an apology for a fire.

"It's not my practice to put to-day's work off till tomorrow. Suppose you were to come and see what you can make of it."

The heap unrolled at this bidding, that is the head was lifted from its reposeful position on the knees, and the arms, as their possessor indulged in a stretch, were thrown in the form of a cross as the girl-for the croucher was a

girl—got up, pirouetted round, and confronted the light vouchsafed by one miserable composite candle, and Mrs. Dobbs.

It was Patty Urske who had been lying on the hearthrug, dreaming and listening to the bells till she was roused by Mrs. Dobbs' voice grumbling over her figures.

Patty Urske, still Patty Urske, and not Max Schipp-heim's wife, for there was no wedding ring on her finger.

Lady Muriel Alston had so far succeeded in getting her away, whether by arrangement or chance no one inquired, since last of all did anyone suspect that she had anything to do with Max Schippheim's mysterious disappearance. As for Patty, she did not know whom or what to suspect; certainly not Lady Muriel—Paul Brumeau, if anyone, but she was more inclined to think some great evil had befallen Mr. Schippheim, and that he was dead, than that any surreptitious course had been pursued by others in connection with him, since she believed the senior partner to be far too shrewd and long sighted a man to be easily lured into a pitfall.

She had remained on at Daleford for several weeks after his strange departure, making such inquiries for him as from her very humble sphere she was able, trusting from compulsion rather than confidence to the search that was set afoot, Patty thought in a very mild way, by the Dale

House people.

Certain it is they did not make any very vigorous efforts

to find Max, but treated the matter rather as a joke.

"Of course, he never meant to marry that low girl," Lady Muriel would say, "only he got his head a little too far into the noose, and had probably gone to America in

order to disentangle himself."

Most people thought with Lady Muriel, except Patty and Patty's immediate friends, the Blighs, and even they at last began to waver, hearing what was said by every one around them. Folks blamed Max Schippheim loudly for his want of loyalty, and dubbed him blackguard and scoundrel pretty freely for leaving a woman in the lurch, but they somehow managed to blame Patty more for her minx-like encouragement of him, thus by their remarks rendering the poor girl's existence such a misery to her that she was well nigh weary of her life, and had it not been for the stanch bravery which abounded in her

character and which upheld her in all difficulties, she would have laid her burden down in the rapid waters of the mill stream, and thus sought oblivion there of all her woes.

To remain at Daleford, however, under existing circumstances, was next to impossible. She could not bear it much longer, and even the Blighs were growing tired of the sort of Barnum show their modest laundry had become since Patty had been left to bewail her loss by the senior partner. Every body for miles round came by way of sympathy to look at her and talk matters over. So Mrs. Bligh suggested her sister Mrs. Dobbs' house as a place where Patty might have a temporary home till she got a situation in London.

One cold December morning, then, she left Daleford without telling any one where she was going, and making Mrs. Bligh, who was a loyal, true woman, less given to chattering than most of her class—making her promise that she would reveal the secret of her whereabouts to no one save Max Schippheim himself, if ever he came back

to look for her.

Patty wished to begin an entirely new life, into which she did not care that either Joe Marks or Paul Brumeau should follow her.

Two days after Mr. Schippheim's disappearance, Joe Marks had made her a formal offer of his hand and an honest home, but Patty had told him so resolutely that. unless to Mr. Schippheim, she would never be a wife at all, that he had gone back to Belton, and not since returned, but Paul Brameau was by no means so easily snubbed. Every day he walked over to Daleford to condole with Patty, tried to make her believe he was using every effort to find Max, but hoped that, all these endeavors failing, she would allow herself to be consoled. M. Brumeau was too wary a diplomat to be very passionate and energetic in his courtship of Patty; but she saw enough of his maneuvers to loathe him each day more and more, and were it only to get away from Brumeau she was truly thankful to leave Daleford. During the weeks that had passed since, still no wife, she took off her bridal dress and laid it on her little bed in Mrs. Bligh's attic, there had been so much talk, so much scandal, so many conjectures, that poor Patty had been kept on the qui

vive; in such a state of feverish excitement, that she could not thoroughly realize the exceeding strangeness of the mystery which, for a time at all events, had marred her life. But when she found herself in London, surrounded by fresh acquaintances, some of whom had never even heard of Max Schippheim, then only did the utter loneliness of her position seem to crush her, and she would sit for hours crouching over the fire as she was doing that New Year's Eve, thinking over all the miseries with

which her path seemed to be beset.

All the roses had faded out of her face, which looked white and bore a haunted expression, as though she lived in a constant fear of whom she might see or what she might hear at any moment. Her beauty, however, had become rather intensified than overshadowed by what she had endured, and as she stood in front of Sarah Dobbs, and that usually engrossed woman looked up at her from her figures, the rather hypercritical lodging-house owner thought but seldom, in all the range of her acquaintance, had she seen a more beautiful girl than Patty Urske.

"Pity she's wasting the best of her days lamentin' a shadow," she muttered, thinking out loud without even

being aware that she was doing so.

The girl heard her, however, and the crimson blood

rushed into her face for a moment.

"What do you mean?" she asked, tartly, "the master ain't no shadow, but the honestest piece of flesh and blood as ever lived on this earth."

"Dare say, my gal, when he was livin' on this yere

earth."

"And do you, too, think he is dead?" asked Patty, all

her color gone, and a deadly paleness succeeding it.

"I don't know nothink about it; all I do say is if you think as he is livin', and is as honest and straightforrard as you believe, why the dickens you don't look for him, I can't think. There's lots o' foul play about; country girl as you be, of course you can't be expected to know, but Lor' bless you, up in Lunnon they'd think no more o' spiritin' away a woman, nor a man neither, no more than nothink, if they got the chance."

"But who ever could?" queried Patty in a wondering

tone.

"Them as is interested, my dear. Money is the main

thing as sways people. Now who would have had this yere gentleman's money if you wasn't to the fore?"

"I don't know for certain, but his nephew, I suppose." "Then p'raps his nephew is at the bottom of it. Who

is his nephew, and where is he?"

"Oh, he is an officer; we call him Captain Christianhe is main good-looking, and Miss Yorke is in love with him. Wish I could see Miss Yorke, but she went away from home ill before any of this happened."

"She is in love with this captain, and is he in love with

her?"

Patty hung her head.

"Don't think so myself—think he is in love with—no, but that's scandal—and I must not say it."

"Nothing is scandal when perhaps this Mr. Schipp-heim's life is at stake. Go on."

Thus encouraged, Patty told what little she knew about the fondness that was supposed to exist between Lady Muriel and Captain Christian.

Sarah Dobbs gave a prolonged "Whew!"

She had lived among evil people for so many years that she never suspected good in any one-most certainly she did not do so here, and at once jumped to the conclusion that she had found the key-note of the mystery. Much interested in the idea of unraveling it, she pushed the accounts on which she had been so deeply engaged away from her, and resting her two arms on the table, she looked fixedly at Patty.

"All right," she said, "go on, tell me some more. How many more black-hearted ones have you yet at Arundale? You are a set of innocents, Elspeth Bligh and the

rest, not to have ferreted this matter out afore."

"You don't think as Lady Muriel has anything to do

with it! She's a mighty deal too grand."

"Grand—my stars! grand! Grand folk is the worst," and Mrs. Dobbs, who was almost a Communist at heart, fell to laughing boisterously at the idea of grandeur preventing vice and crime.

"Well, I feel sure as it ain't Lady Muriel," persisted

Patty; "it might be the French Mounseer."

"A French Mounseer! I never heard of him afore. You do keep your tidbits well concealed inside the cake dough. Go on, tell us everything from beginning to end.

It's a holiday-making as we'll do to-night, for the accounts won't come right with them bells. Stop a minnit; I'll just get a little whisky to keep the new year in a good

humor, and then begin."

Patty, who had never tasted spirits in her life, declined the proffered whisky, but she consented to make a confidante of Mrs. Dobbs, partly because her heart was full, partly because she had a certain amount of belief in the knowing widow's capability of helping her.

The bells had long since ceased to ring, and still they both sat there over the fire, which Sarah Dobbs had stirred up into a good blaze. So interested was she in the girl's story, that she almost forgot to sip her whisky and water.

It was just three o'clock, when, at last, she got up,

saving-

"They're a bad lot—the whole bilin' of them. We'll go and see Peter Swift to-morrow, if we can get along they dratted streets, and if he don't put ye on the track, well, no man can."

"Who's Peter Swift, Mrs. Dobbs?"

"Who's Peter Swift! Well, that there is a bit of a puzzler too! He ain't a detective and he ain't a lawyer, he ain't an honest man, and he ain't altogether a rogue, but he's just a little bit of all the lot, and he's as clever as Old Nick himself."

"Where does he live?"

"A long way from here—there's the difficulty this weather, but my corns says we shall have a change soon. Let's see what the night looks like. Cheer up, my gal, it's New Year's morn, and who knows but the buddin'y year may bring you luck."

So saying, she unfastened the paintless shutter, and

looked out into the snow-clad, dawnless morning.

"Drippin'? I'm blest if I ain't drippin'; we'll have a thaw and a rare slosh afore middle day, and we'll see if we can't wade through them streets to where Old Peter lives."

CHAPTER XXIV.

PETER SWIFT.

ANVILL COURT is one of the many courts in which the Strand abounds. It is perhaps narrower and consequently closer than most of the others, but it is not for that reason any the less thickly populated; quite the contrary. Every room is let off for business or other purposes, every available niche utilized in some way or another.

About four doors up this court, among the numerous names painted on the door post, is that of Peter Swift, who is the occupant of a back room on the second floor. Professedly, it is his office; but that it also serves him for bedroom and kitchen and hall, is testified by various signs

and implements which lie scattered abroad.

Peter Swift is a little wizen old man, to all appearance well on in the sixties. He is nearly bent double as he sits glancing with keen eyes over some papers he holds in his trembling hands. His hair, which is quite white, hangs in scant curls over the greasy collar of his coat; but his head, from being quite bald at the top, is protected by a velvet cap, originally embellished with rich and artistic embroidery, but now grown faded and dull from age. It is the only thing bearing resemblance to wealth in the old man's room, and had been years ago the gift of a grateful client with rather more money to command than the rest of the people who consulted Peter Swift.

It must not, however, be supposed, judging from the bareness and general dirtiness of Peter Swift's abode, that he was a very poor man. He was one of those grubbers who never waste the opportunity of making a farthing, and who expend the merest trifle most grudgingly, when

even large sums of money are made.

Some people said his hoards were considerable, some said he was a miserly beggar; no one knew the exact truth about him except that he was "at home to all callers," as he himself expressed it, every day from eleven till four, and that he made a good many shillings in the course of the morning by giving advice, undertak-

ing bad debts, arranging to hunt up mysterious intelligence, making wills, writing an occasional love letter, et cetera, et cetera; for Peter Swift's connection, though entirely confined to the lower orders, was by no means a small one.

Mrs. Dobbs had employed him for years; he had been most useful to her whenever she had had any trouble with her lodgers, or required any other business transaction which came within the jurisdiction of the pettifogger.

As Sarah Dobbs had predicted, by twelve o'clock on New Year's Day the streets were in a state of slush, and having walked most of the way, for omnibusses had not yet resumed their usual daily routine, she and Patty arrived at Anvill Court about one o'clock with bedraggled petticoats and wet, mud-stained boots.

"Mercy on us! what has brought you two ladies out in such weather?" exclaimed Mr. Swift, when they, having knocked at the door, were bidden to come in. "Some

case of very great importance, I make no doubt."

"Ay! a lost husband, and a grieving bride, that's the sort of business to interest you, ain't it, Peter?" and Mrs.

Dobbs set up one of her vulgar guffaws.

Peter pushed the spectacles he usually wore up on his forehead and looked fixedly at Patty; naturally he inferred that she was the bride.

"That's it; you're right, she is the young person. Fire away, Patty, my gal, and tell your tale in as few words as

may be—Peter hates long yarns."

"Be seated, ladies," says Mr. Peter Swift, who is invaribly polite to the fair sex, but who, nevertheless, rather dreads the long story with which he fears, notwithstanding Mrs. Dobbs' warning against garrulity, he is about to be inflicted.

Patty, however, has not uttered half-a-dozen sentences of her statement before Peter becomes intensely interested. It is exactly the sort of case with which he delights to deal, more perhaps for amusement than profit, though profit, too, he makes little doubt about securing if he is only lucky enough to unravel the mystery concerning Mr. Schippheim's fate. He by no means takes the view that he has gone to America to be rid of Patty, but is very much inclined to believe that his relations and connections have been contriving some diabolical scheme in

order to rid themselves of what they consider an objectionable alliance.

Peter Swift has for so long been accustomed to side with the poor that he has a good many of Mrs. Dobbs' views, and finds it difficult to ascribe any fair dealing intentions to the rich.

He cross-examined Patty with the most minute care,

taking down every particular she was able to give. "Troublesome business, ain't it, and expensive," said "Ought to be advertisements and rewards Mrs. Dobbs. and all kinds of things; but where's the money? I ain't got none to waste, and I'm sure this 'ere gal-"

"I've got a hundred pounds," interrupted Patty, "and I'm sure I'd spend every farthing of it with pleasure to

find Mr. Schippheim."

"A hundred pounds? that's worth knowing," muttered honest Peter, beneath his breath; but he only said out loud, "Brave little heart! what a pity there are not more girls like you in the world. Let me think; let me ponder over the mode in which I can best help you."

Peter Swift was always very specious both in word and manner, invariably speaking the Queen's English with a distinctness and correctness of utterance which gave the idea that in his youth he had moved in another sphere, probably had been reduced to this one by his own pecca-

dilloes, if not more heinous offenses.

"Advertisements are of no use," he decided, after a few seconds passed in thought, "since, in all probability, those detaining Mr. Schippheim are the people most interested in concealing him. We will not therefore waste money in this way. A search warrant is the first thing to obtain, as then, under all suspicious circumstances, we can make the necessary investigations, and always have the law on our side. I should like-nay, I may say I should enjoy a personal interview with this French designer. I think I shall go down to Arundale myself."

"You, Mr. Swift, you!" cried Mrs. Dobbs in some surprise. "I thought as you never left this yere court."

"Not frequently, my dear madam, not frequently, but there are cases when locomotion is necessary; this is a delicate undertaking which I should not like to trust to any

"I'm thinking a bit of the money," observed Mrs.

Dobbs, who, the truth being told, had no intention of having Patty's hundred pounds frittered away without

having a good share of it herself.

"If this young lady will hand over to me ten pounds, I will guarantee that, without receiving any further remittance, I will investigate matters and give her my honest opinion as to whether Mr. Shippheim has or has not been detained involuntarily. You, I think, Mrs. Dobbs, know me well-enough to be aware of that if any man in England can ferret this matter out, that man is myself."

"I can indeed. You're main clever, Peter Swift, and I'd intrust my nearest interest to you; it's only the money I'm thinking of."

"Exactly. We must all live, Mrs. Dobbs. I am a poor man, and must be paid for my work."

"I'm sure I'll give this gentleman ten pounds without another word about the matter," cried Patty, fumbling in the front part of her dress from whence she produced some notes and laid two fives on the table. Another second and Peter Swift had locked them up in the drawer in front of him. A receipt was an instrument which, in the sort of trade he carried on, it would have been most inconvenient to give, for Peter Swift was not always engaged in such straightforward business as that brought to him by Mrs. Dobbs on this occasion. Even that knowing woman herself had employed him on matters with which she would not have cared for all the world to know that she had aught to do.

He had taken ample notes of names and addresses, personal appearance, &c., &c., and now, having secured his ten pounds, he got up on his somewhat shaky legs—it was evident the mental far exceeded the physical power in Peter Swift—and bowed courteously to his two visitors. He wished them to understand that the audience was at an end, and that his valuable time could be encroached on no more.

Mrs. Dobbs knew his ways and took the hint, telling Patty to go on down stairs, she would follow her in a second.

The girl obeyed, and Mrs. Dobbs employed the second in reminding Peter Swift that she had brought him a client, and should expect that fact to be remembered.

"A little percentage, I presume," he answered, with a

smile.

She nodded her head toward the drawer were the fivers had been just put; she had no idea that they should remain there without her having any pickings. Peter Swift took a sovereign from his waistcoat pocket and gave it to her.

"Ten per cent., Mrs. Dobbs, that is about the extent of your expectations?"

She pocketed it with a sort of grunt.

"Good morning, Mr. Swift."

Another minute or two, and she was down in the Court beside Patty.

"Come along, my beauty; you've done a good day's work with them bright eyes of yours; you've fetched old Peter, who ain't one of the easiest to tackle, and stirred him up to doing the best he can for ye, and may be ye'll be happy with yer old sweetheart yet."

"I am sure I'm very much obliged to you, Mrs.

Dobbs."

"Don't mention it, my dear; you're welcome, I'm sure, to any poor help as I can afford. There never yet was any folk as could say Sarah Dobbs was a selfish woman."

"No, indeed. You are most generous."

"Well, come on, we won't talk of that; we'll get a bit further along this mucky Strand and have a bit of something to eat at the cookshop at the corner."

Even Mrs. Dobbs felt she had not quite deserved so

many remarks upon her generosity.

They followed Mrs. Dobbs' programme, and by the time they had finished a good warm dinner of pickled pork and peas pudding, it was four o'clock, and already almost dark.

Not since Max's disappearance had Patty eaten so heartily or looked so well; she had been put into spirits by the fact that she had made a move toward finding him, a move which she did not think would be wholly futile, that is, if he were still among the living, a fact about which Patty had such a secret misgiving that a dread of the worst never ceased to oppress her, even at the moments when she was most sanguine about discovering some trace of her missing betrothed.

Owing to the weather, there was still great difficulty in obtaining an omnibus, but few being on the road, and what few there were being quite full. They waited about for some little time, and then Mrs. Dobbs, after much grumbling, decided to walk, no very enviable journey, considering the state of the streets, the darkness which prevented the numerous snow heaps from being perceptible, and the general murkiness and chilliness of the atmosphere.

"A New Year's Day like this I never remember in all my blessed life, and me as has asked the Hopkinses and the Barneses to supper. They'll be there afore we're ready if we don't look sharp; for we sha'n't have a dry stitch to our backs by the time we get home. Lor', mind that there puddle, Patty, it's most like a river. I was

anigh in it."

"I'm all right," said Patty, laughing.

To her young nimble limbs and quick sight, the streets presented but few obstacles. The slush had not even touched her dainty short skirts, nor were her boots more than moderately muddied, while the expedition altogether would have been under other circumstances rather an amusing one to the fresh country girl. When they got into Holborn there was a good deal of traffic; many people with business that, owing to the snow storm, had been deferred for days, were taking advantage of this the first break in the weather. The shops looked bright, and gay, and attractive. Patty, with her love for grandeur and pretty things, could not help stopping every now and then to look into them, in spite of Mrs. Dobbs' frequent urgings to come on; so much so, that the girl was frequently in danger of losing her friend altogether.

At last they came to an important-looking furniture shop, in the large windows of which was displayed a gorgeous set of drawing-room chairs and sofas covered with silk brocade of the most artistic Eastern designs; little buhl tables and chiffoniers had been placed amongst them by the hand of a master, which had also draped curtains in lace and of a sympathetic peacock blue satin in the form of a tent. It was a most telling picture, and not only were Patty's eyes riveted on it, but there was quite a

crowd of Londoners gazing open-mouthed.

Mrs. Dobbs would without any doubt have joined the

group had not the recollection of the Hopkinses and the

Barneses been heavy on her mind.

Patty, however, had no such incentive to hasten her steps toward home, and she stood stock-still gazing in speechless wonder. For some seconds—nay, even moments—she stood thus, till at last she turned round to make some remark to Mrs. Dobbs, and found the old woman had gone on without her. To find her way Patty was unable. She had no knowledge of the localities in London, but she was not easily frightened.

"I'll wait here a bit and see if she comes back, and if she don't, I suppose there's a policeman," she decided philosophically, still feasting her eyes on the fairy-like scene in the shop window. On a sudden she uttered a

little cry.

Coming out of the shop were two young ladies and a middle-aged gentleman. There was a carriage, a sort of hired brougham or fly, at the door, and into it they all three were about to get, when Patty's exclamation made one of them look round.

"Patty!" she now also, in wonder, exclaimed. "Patty, whatever are you doing here in London? Where are you staving?"

The speaker was Bertha Yorke, who had come up from Richmond, with Mr. Tramberley and Angey, to do the

shopping which had been delayed so long.

Patty gave the address of Mrs. Dobbs' house, and Bertha, holding out her hand as she got into the carriage, asked rather shyly—

"Still Patty Urske?"

"Oh, Miss Yorke, then you haven't heard. Oh, how I should like to tell you all about it."

"Come and see me very soon. Barrack Grange, Rich-

mond; don't forget the address."

Another moment and Bertha was gone.

She had come like a vision, like a vision she had departed, and she knew nothing of Max Schippheim's dis-

appearance; it was more than strange.

Patty had forgotten all about the artistic tent in Messrs. Wraggles' window now, but remained on the pavement, gazing after the carriage long after it was out of sight, pondering on the lost vision, when she was awakened from

her reverie by Mrs. Dobbs' voice speaking in anything but

the most honeyed accents.

"It's trapesing as I've had enough of this blessed murky day, and to think as I'm obliged to come draggling back to look after you, as if you was a baby in long clothes, and my friends waiting too! You ought to ashamed of yourself."

Patty merely said very quietly—

"I am very sorry, but I missed you, and thought I had

better wait here for you to come back."

Then she followed her without further comment. She did not tell Mrs. Dobbs that she had seen Bertha Yorke.

CHAPTER XXV.

"I WILL NEVER FORGET YOU."

By the middle of January the frost had quite departed, and every particle of snow had vanished, giving place to a week of spring weather which was unnatural in its warmth and brightness. Bertha and Angey passed their entire time out of doors and enjoyed the unusual sunshine as much as two love-sick damsels parted from their lovers could be expected to do, especially as Bertha had twice seen Patty since the day of their momentary meeting in Oxford Street, and her thoughts were considerably engrossed by the to her unaccountable story of Max Schippman's disappearance.

Twist it how she would, no light seemed to break upon it, that is, no rose-tinted light, for she feared, though she scarcely dared own it, that those she loved best on earth

were involved in the matter.

Could Christian Meyer have had anything to do with this disappearance, in order that by preventing his uncle's marriage he might enjoy his fortune? Could Lady Muriel be assisting him to gain this end because she loved him?

If this were so—and Bertha dreaded it, though she did not suggest it even to Angey—but if it were so, how she hated both Christian and Lady Muriel for their baseness. Bertha's was one of those noble natures that cannot go on loving the being it has learnt to despise. The two girls would wander for hours in the large grounds surrounding Barrack Grange, talking on no subject save their lovers—that is, Angey would chatter ceaselessly about Felix Elton and his perfections, but Bertha was as silent as she dared be without arousing sus-

picion on the subject of Christian Meyer.

It was about three o'clock one afternoon when the friends, driven from their favorite walk about the grounds by the more than usual tempest the younger members of the family had evoked, determined to go out at a little side gate that led into a back lane which would eventually bring them to the river-side.

They had scarcely got into the lane before they saw two

men coming toward them at a brisk pace.

Felix Elton and Christian Meyer! They had not time to pronounce their names before they were close to them. No chance of escape. Nothing for it but to stand blushing and smiling, and make the best of being caught, as it were, in a trap. Christian, from his very long acquaintance with Bertha, and his general free-and easiness of manner, was the spokesman.

"Well met, young ladies," he cried; "we were coming to call at Barrack Grange, but a miscreant of a boy has told us the wrong turn, and we are evidently arriving at

the back door instead of the front."

"Mrs. Tramberley is out; gone to London on business," answered Bertha, with some dignity, as though, that fact having been stated, the visitors must therefore depart at once.

She did not seem to have considered that they would

probably regard it as good news.

Angey, who was so very loquacious in Mr. Elton's praise when he was absent, now stood looking at him in shy silence, the very tips of her shell-like ears tinged with crimson.

"Are you going for a walk?" was the next question, followed, of course, by—

"May we accompany you?"

They had it not in their soft little hearts to refuse, but Bertha resolved to tell Christian what she thought of his conduct about Uncle Max.

"And then," she conjectured, "when he knows what I

think of him, what an utter contempt I have for him, he will never wait to come near me again as long as I live."

Of course, ere many minutes had elapsed the particarré merged into tête-à-têtes, and while the other two were really forgetting everything on earth but the pleasure of each other's society, Bertha had a full opportunity of making

her grave charge against Christian.

Poor Christian! He was so happy, thinking he had done a good work that day, for not only had he himself come down to Richmond to see his sweet Bertha, but he had persuaded Felix Elton that his behavior was of the most selfish and absurd nature, and that he was in duty bound to accompany him to Barrack Grange, own all the love he had for Angey and ask her to be his wife without any ridiculous conditions, while Christian himself—well, it was very certain he intended to make hay while the sun of Lady Muriel's presence was set.

What then was his surprise at being indignantly asked by Bertha how he could have been so base and worthless

as to lend himself to Max Schippheim's abduction?

"Uncle Max abducted! Really, Bertha, you must be

joking-the idea is too funny."

He soon, however, discovered that she was terribly in earnest, only stopped for a moment in the torrent of reproach she showered upon him by the assurance on his word of honor that this was the very first he had heard of Max Schippheim's disappearance. He believed him to be still at Arundale, in all probability married to Patty by this time.

Bertha was as astounded at his ignorance of what had happened as he was that anything so startling had happened at all. Both their calculations had been thoroughly upset, and as for lovemaking, for the present at all events,

it had not a chance.

Over and over all Patty had told her Bertha was condemned to go fifty times, rewarded, however, at the last by the exclamation from Christian—

"So-I will have an explanation with my lady; she is

at the bottom of this."

"Just what I think," observed Bertha, "only, unless it is for you, I can't quite make out why she does it."

He looked at her for a moment to see how much that

"for you" meant, and then he said:

"For me, yes—I suppose it is partly for me—only if I did not exist I expect my lady would put a spoke in the wheel of this marriage. Fancy little Patty Urske set up as a rival to Lady Muriel Alston, and she would be as the senior partner's wife," and he began to laugh. Checking himself, however, he went on, "But I can't think what the deuce they've done with Uncle Max."

"Had you not better go and see Patty and this Mr. Peter Swift, who seems to have taken up the case for her?"

"Ay, will I—this very day. And you will believe, Bertha, will you not, that I have nothing to do with this business, and when I have made every inquiry, and Uncle Max is found—as of course he will be—you will try to love me just a little, and will consent to—"

She did not let him finish the sentence, for she put her

hand in his.

"I am sorry I doubted you for one moment, Christian. Go and do all you can in this matter, and believe I—"

"Well, dearest Bertha"
"I will never forget you.

He caught her for a moment in his arms, and imprinted a kiss on her calm, sweet brow, while she did not attempt to resist, as she would have done an hour ago. Another minute or two and he was gone back to town by the next train, Bertha having consented to accompany him to the station, and leaving Felix Elton and Angey to the uninterrupted bliss of their first real love confidence.

When about an hour later they returned to the back lane from a long wander, they found Bertha standing alone by the little gate, looking very sad and serious. Even at that moment she was thinking more of Lady Muriel's treachery than of her own happiness in the now

established belief in Christian's truth and probity.

Where was Captain Meyer gone? of course they asked; but they were too much taken up with their own bright prospects to do more than ascertain that he had not left Richmond suddenly on account of any quarrel with Bertha; and then they all three went together to the house, where by this time they hoped Mr. and Mrs. Tramberley had returned, since Felix Elton intended to assure them that he could not live without Angey, and that, withdrawing all conditions, he hoped they would give her to him for a wife.

Meanwhile Christian went on his thoughtful way to town straight to his club, where he sat down and wrote an indignant letter to Lady Muriel, accusing her of being the instigator of all this trouble and disgrace, and requesting to be told at once everything she knew of Max Schippheim's disappearance.

His mind thus relieved he started to pay Peter Swift a visit. Christian was scarcely more keen that his uncle should marry Patty Urske than Lady Muriel was, though he would have done nothing beyond making a few disparaging remarks in order to stop the progress of events; still he had a sort of feeling that he did not care to be thrown more than was absolutely necessary into communication with the young person Uncle Max had elected to 'double his pleasures and his toils divide."

By the time he reached Peter Swift's quarters in the court off the Strand, it was tolerably late, and all business was over. Peter, however, never refused a client, even if he came out of hours, and Captain Christian Meyer was consequently admitted without difficulty. In fact, as the old man told him as soon as he had stated his business, it was lucky he had come that evening, as in the morning he intended to go himself to Arundale, and make such personal interrogatories as he considered the seriousness of the case warranted.

"I am not a rich man, being merely a captain in a marching regiment with a limited allowance, but only put me on the track to find my uncle and discover who or what has detained him, and I will make it worth your while."

"Then you think he has been detained—has not gone

off to avoid this marriage?"

"If you knew Uncle Max you would not ask this question. He is the soul of honor—was never known to depart from his pledged word. No; either he has been entrapped or some accident has befallen him."

"It is your opinion that if Mr. Schippheim is alive and once more becomes a free agent, it will still be his wish

to conclude this marriage?"

"Most decidedly and emphatically it is my opinion. I never knew him to withdraw from a fixed purpose."

"I am glad to hear you speak thus, young man, as it

makes me more than commonly anxious to be of service in this case."
"How? Why?"

"When I have been to Arundale you shall know more. Meantime, may I ask you to make no move in the matter for a day or two. It is important that I should appear at Arundale as an uninterested stranger."

"I have already written to Lady Muriel reproaching her for having kept me in the dark, and telling her what

information I have received."

"Dear-dear-dear! I am sorry-very sorry that you did not come to me before any steps were taken. However, I will go to Arundale to-morrow, and return on the evening of the following day, when perhaps you will

kindly call on me about this hour."

Christian agreed to this arrangement, and soon afterward bent his steps westward, first to his club for some dinner, then by the last train to Aldershot. He thought more, perhaps, of Bertha than of his Uncle Max during his journey, which was a solitary one, and he quite resolved to stop that exchange to foreign service which was pending unless Bertha would consent to accompany him in a temporary exile, until their finances should improve.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A BROKEN TRYST.

PATTY was one of those people who cannot imagine that a great lady would commit a disloyal act. As a great lady, she from her humble sphere regarded Bertha, and much as she wished the secret of her whereabouts in London to be kept, she confided it unconditionally to Bertha, who, she was right, assuredly would not have injured her willingly for worlds, and yet-

As Patty was coming along one afternoon, hastening home to tea, after having been an errand for Mrs. Dobbs, who should she see standing by the lamp-post almost in front of Mrs. Dobbs' door, but the very last person on

earth she wished to see-M. Paul Brumeau.

She stopped suddenly; for a moment she thought of running away anywhere rather than meet that dreadful

man, but it was too late; he had seen her, was evidently waiting for her, and with extended arms came hurrying toward her.

"Ma mignonne, ma chérie. I have looked for you, pined for you. Who den was wicked enough to take my

beautiful soul from me?"

"Hold your tongue and don't talk to me like that. What do you want?" said Patty, with a roughness which was assumed to conceal her real fright.

"What shall I want but you? Are you not to me an

angel of loveliness and grace?"

She burst out laughing.
"Well, you can run on! I'm a plain working girl, that's all, and I don't want any of your precious humbug. In the house I'm living in here no followers are allowed, and if you don't make off pretty sharp you'll have Mrs. Dobbs sending the police after you. She is a Tartar and no mistake."

You will not say she keep you, my beautiful Patty,

like a slave."

"Doesn't she just, and she'll keep you like a convict if she catches you—so you had best be off. You don't know how strict the laws are in England for them who loiter about honest folks' doors."

"Then take me inside the house."

"Inside! That is quite impossible, but after I have given some messages to Mrs. Dobbs and had my tea I'll come and meet you at the end of the street if you like."

You will—you will, my beautiful Patty? I always knew well it was me you love, and cannot resist. In half-

an-hour, then, you will come."

"Say three-quarters; Mrs. Dobbs might keep me a bit."
All this time Patty was edging nearer and nearer to her own doorstep, and once more promising to meet him, she at last managed to get in by means of the latch-key and shut the door.

In a few words she told Mrs. Dobbs what had happened, and then she went to examine the premises at the back. There was no legitimate exit, but Patty was agile, and she at once saw that by getting through a window and dropping down on to some leads she could manage to be off at once.

"But where, in the name of wonder, is the girl going

to?" asked Mrs. Dobbs in some dismay.

"Oh, I'll get a cab and drive to Peter Swift's; he'll hide me somewhere," answered Patty, hugging the ninety pounds still left out of her hundred which she kept sewn in the bosom of her dress.

Paul Brumeau meantime was not very sure of Patty, and resolved to wait at the door till she returned. Threequarters of an hour would soon pass, he argued. Threequarters of an hour became an hour; an hour and a-half; two hours, and still she did not appear. Tired of waiting and irritated at the idea of being made a fool of, he rang the bell. It was answered by Mrs. Dobbs, who disclaimed all knowledge of both Patty's whereabouts and herself.

"He must be mistaken in the house; perhaps the

young person lived next door," she said blandly.

But Paul Brumeau was certain he was right and swore and vociferated in his bad English till a little crowd began to collect, and Mrs. Dobbs threatened to give him in

charge if he did not depart peacefully and at once.

To be locked up in a London police station did not exactly suit M. Brumeau's views, and he preferred to take his departure. Turning himself round for this purpose, just as Mrs. Dobbs slammed the door, the full light from the gas lamp fell on a face he had seen before—the features of Max Schippheim, the senior partner.

If a ghost had come from the dead to meet him there, Paul Brumeau could scarcely have been more horrified; he ran down the street, a cold perspiration breaking out all over him, and whether Max Schippheim found Patty or not, it was very certain Paul Brumeau never called in the

street off Tottenham Court Road to inquire.

Of course, as soon as Paul Brumeau was out of sight, Mr. Schippheim rang the bell; but Mrs. Dobbs was far too cautious to obey the summons, and for at least half an hour he remained there, ringing at intervals, before she at last condescended to put her head out of a first floor window.

"You won't get in, my good man, so you had best leave

off making that din, and take yourself off."
"The Frenchman is gone," was the ready answer. am Max Schippheim, and I should like to speak to you for a moment."

"Max Schippheim! you!" and Mrs. Dobbs gave way to such loud and hearty laughter that the whole street rang

again.

In vain he assured her, over and over again, that he had just returned after an unavoidable absence of some months; she would not believe him, nor acknowledge that she knew aught of Patty or her whereabouts. He had been to Daleford, he told her, and got Patty's address from Mrs. Bligh; surely she would believe now that he was all right, since Mrs. Bligh was her own sister. He had not been into the works, or in fact into Arundale at all, since he did not wish to be recognized till he had found Patty, and had therefore gone straight from the station to Daleford in the dark.

This explanation was given in a somewhat disjointed manner, Mrs. Dobbs being still at the window and Max Schippheim on the doorstep, surrounded by a group of open-mouthed idlers, who could not think what had come to No. 6, it was so lively this blessed evening.

His words, however, had at last the effect of somewhat shaking Mrs. Dobbs' unbelief, and she told him to go to Peter Swift, Anvill Court, Strand, who, she said, had undertaken to find him, and would soon give him the cold

shoulder if he was another Tichborne claimant.

She did not tell him Patty had gone to Peter Swift because, as she shrewdly conjectured, if he was only a creature of Brumeau's that would take him there at once, while being the wrong man he was pretty sure not to run his head into a lawyer's office, which she told him Swift's quarters were, adding, however, that he could go even at that hour, since Peter was too much a man of business to sleep off the premises.

Max, finding he could get no more out of Mrs. Dobbs,

finally hailed a hansom and drove off Strandward.

In Anvill Court it was very dark and somber-looking; he managed to find the plate, however, with Peter Swift's name, and stumbling up an unlighted staircase he fell against the door of the old man's room, but no one answered his summons, which was a pretty loud one with his fist. There was not a sound but the echo of his repeated thumps and the distant rolling of vehicles in the Strand.

It wanted an hour yet of the time Peter Swift had ap-

pointed to meet Christian Meyer, and he had not returned from Arundale.

Where then was Patty! She could not be inside, since the door had been fast locked ever since Peter went away

and took the key in his pocket.

But of her intended visit there of course Max knew nothing, and finally wended his way slowly down the desolate staircase, vowing vengeance the while against Mrs. Dobbs for sending him on what he was pleased to consider a wild goose chase.

He sauntered back up the court, into the Strand, standing for awhile at the opening to consider what was the next step to take, since he seemed destined to be foiled at every

issue.

"Arundale!" He supposed he had better go to Arundale in the morning, make his return known far and wide, and trust that the clamor would sooner or later

reach Patty's ears.

While he was still considering the matter, some one pushed against him in an endeavor to get through the little passage leading into the court, and in fact nearly knocked him down, for Max Schippheim was not nearly as firm on his feet, or as robust as he was in the old Arundale days, when the senior partner reigned supreme.

"Christian!"

- "Uncle Max! They told me you were lost. Can it be possible that I have had a practical joke palmed off upon me?"
- "Well, I have been away for three months on an erand on which I never intended to go—been carried off, in fact."

"And by whom?"

Max Schippheim shrugged his shoulders.

"It is strange you know nothing of the matter, Christian."

"It was only the day before yesterday I heard by chance from Bertha Yorke, who is staying with friends at Richmond, that you were absent. I hear but little Arundale news now, I am—well, scarcely as friendly with Lady Muriel as I used to be."

"Ah! that is good, very good. And where are you go-

ing now?"

"To see a certain Peter Swift who has been to Arun-

dale, to make inquiries about you, and is to meet me at eight o'clock."

"He has not returned. I have been there."

"Oh, he will not be long. Let us go in and wait; meantime tell me where in Heaven's name you have been all this time."

"First tell me, Christian, where is my Patty?"

"Oh, with Mrs. Dobbs in - Street."

The woman there denies all knowledge of her. I found Paul Brumeau at the door."

"Well, this beats everything. I wish Swift would

come back."

By this time they had reached the landing on which Peter Swift's room was situated. A dim lamp was now burning over the door; it was evident that he had returned. Still, to their repeated knocking, as before, no answer was given.

"This is altogether the most mysterious affair I ever had anything to do with. Why the devil doesn't the fellow open the door!" cried Christian, growing impatient. "Hallo there, Swift—let me in—let me in; I am Chris-

tian Meyer, come by your own appointment."

There was a good deal of shuffling and movement heard inside, and finally the door was opened a very few inches by Peter Swift himself.

"I am sorry—it is very inconvenient," he said; "can you not come in the morning? I have heard nothing at

Arundale that will not keep till then."

"No, indeed I cannot; I must be back at Aldershot; besides I have got some one here whose presence will render all further search unnecessary."

"Max Schippheim!" exclaimed Peter Swift, as he came forward on to the landing where the dim flicker of the lamp fell just clearly enough on Max's features to render them recognizable.

He held out his hand, which was warmly grasped by

the man who called himself Peter Swift.

"I did not expect to find you here, Peter, my old

friend," said Max Schippheim, with some emotion.

"No. Times have changed with both of us—with you for the better, with me for the worse—since those old days now long syne. But come inside, my good friend,

come inside, and tell us all about your wanderings. There is no reason now why the door should be defended."

No, indeed, there was not, for scarcely had Max advanced three steps before a small white hand was laid on his shoulder, and Patty, with wide-open eyes brimming

over with tears, was gazing into his honest face.

He caught her to his heart and kissed away the tears as they glistened off her long lashes, regardless of the presence of two witnesses, who stood watching them with as much interest as though they were personally interested in this somewhat unusual love affair.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HOME AT LAST.

THE wedding was over; it had been a very quiet one, without fuss or ado, taking place by special license from Mrs. Dobbs' house, with no witnesses save that good woman herself, Christian, who acted as best man, Peter Swift, who gave away the bride, and Bertha Yorke, who lent Patty her prettiest dress, her own being at Daleford, and who asked, as an especial favor, to be allowed to be present.

As yet, Max Schippheim had vouchsafed no reason for his unaccountable absence. "Till Patty was his wife he would give no explanations," he said. The only portion of the mystery which had as yet been cleared up was Peter Swift's antecedents, and his reason for considering it his rightful duty to give away the bride, since she was his

granddaughter, he told them.

Nor was Patty to go dowerless to the altar. The ten pounds she had given old Peter in his capacity of pettifogger, when he little knew that the bright beauty seeking for her lover was his own kith and kin, was repaid with interest, and a bag containing a good many gold pieces, and well-worn bank notes, was presented to Patty as a wedding gift from her penitent grandfather.

Ay, Patty's mother had married a gentleman, as old Mrs. Urske had told her—a gentleman who would have brought her to the workhouse save for the old woman's interference, who took her child home to die when little Patty was born; assuredly he brought himself to the gutter, and ruining old Peter, reduced him from a position of independence—he was a small landed squire when Max Schippheim first came to seek fortune at Arundale—to the pettifogging, money-grubbing career into which first his necessities and then his inclination had impelled him.

The health of the bride and bridegroom had been drunk. In half an hour they were to start for Arundale, where Max Schippheim's presence was absolutely necessary, every department in the works being in a state approaching chaos, as Andrew had acknowledged in a letter the senior partner had received from him that very morning.

Max Schippheim rose to return thanks for the toast, and

his friends' good wishes.

"And now," he said, "your curiosity shall be gratified, and you shall learn that while you have all been in search of me I have been to Australia."

"To Australia?" they exclaimed in chorus.

"Yes. I was sent for to Liverpool by my partner, Alston, because my presence was necessary to identify a clerk who had robbed us to a great extent a few months previously. I started, leaving a note for little Patty with Paul Brumeau, whom at that moment I believed to be devoted to us both. Needless to say, he never delivered it. Reaching Skene, a junction about half-way between Arundale and Liverpool, I met Herbert Alston, who informed me that it was useless to proceed to Liverpool, since the man we wanted to convict had bolted from there, and he ascertained on good authority was gone to Plymouth, where he expected to catch an outward-bound ship for Melbourne; that he had studied Bradshaw for half-an-hour in my behalf, and there was just time enough for us to reach Plymouth, have the escaped felon arrested, and return by the day and hour fixed for the wedding. train which was to carry us on dashed into the station at this moment. I had no opportunity of verifying his statement and accompanied him. So far he was right; the Orang-outang, Australian steamer, was lying off Plymouth, waiting for letters and last communications from shore. We boarded her, accompanied by a detective in plain clothes Herbert Alston had had the foresight to provide, but his information had been incorrect; no man of the name of our defaulting clerk was in the ship,

nor, in fact, of his personal appearance, for as ill luck would have it, I was on board that ship for a good many weeks. How it was managed I know not, whether it was my fault or Alston's, but during the hasty search we all made for the man I got locked into a cabin and was some time before I could get the door opened. Meanwhile the ship had started, and Alston and the detective had gone ashore without me."

This announcement was received in dead silence. There was no one sitting by that table who did not believe that Herbert Alston was implicated in this business—no one but simple-minded Max Schippheim himself, who would not think his partner guilty of an evil action he would

have scorned to commit himself.

By the time each one of those present had decided in his own mind the Alstons' motives for what had occurred,

Mr. Shippheim went on.

"It was useless for me to rage or swear or offer a large sum of money, which I did; nothing would induce the captain to put back; if we touched at Cape St. Vincent, which we might do, I could send a message or land; if not I must go back from Adelaide. Long before we reached Cape St. Vincent I was confined to my berth in a raging fever, and whether we touched or not I do not even at this moment know. All I do know is that I made a very wearisome convalescence and was scarcely able to be conveyed on shore when we arrived at Adelaide. I managed, however, as soon as possible, to find myself on a home-bound ship, and the thought, that every knot we traversed brought me nearer to my darling Patty, helped to raise my spirits and bring me back in something like my old form of health and strength."

"And will you not take some means to punish those who sent you on this long journey and brought about so much vexation and discomfort?" asked Christian, in whom

the young blood waxed hot.

But Max Schippheim only said, smilingly—"Let those laugh who win, my boy. Lady Muriel has lost her little game; she will be the greater sufferer; she has been pitting her strength against mine for some years now, trying to distance me and put Alston and yourself, Christian, in my place."

Christian got very red.

"I assure you, Uncle Max, I have nothing whatever to

"My abduction; no, my boy, I do not think you have for one moment, or I should certainly not have the intention I now entertain of making a handsome settlement on you the day you marry my very dear young friend, Miss Bertha, there."

It was now Bertha's turn to grow rosy red, which she did, all the more because at this juncture Christian squeezed her hand under the table, while he expressed his warmest thanks to his uncle in a short but neatly ar-

ranged sentence.

"And now," said Max Schippheim, "we must be off, or we shall miss the train. Come along, Patty, we have plenty of work in hand to bring the old place into working order again."

"One moment before you go," said Peter Swift, "let

me put in a little request."

"A thousand if you like, to-day, old friend; I feel so

happy."

to discharge Paul Brumeau at once—send him out of the place at a moment's notice. He is the real instigator of all this mischief; love for little Patty here has made him mad, and he suggested to—well, never mind who he suggested it to, but he suggested that if you were got out of the way for a time, he would marry Patty, and thus prevent what was considered a mésalliance.

"I'd have died first," put in the bride, while her slave and master linked her arm in his, and remarked that he did not think Paul Brumeau would venture to show his

face again in Arundale.

And he was right. Paul Brumeau went back to his ewn country, from whence he made at various intervals many applications to Lady Muriel Alston for money.

"And now good by," went on Schippheim, in cheery tones; "come back to Arundale, Swift, and if the house where you used to live is turned into a wing of the factory, never mind. We'll find you another, and you'll be most useful to me in many ways."

But Peter Swift shook his head.

"He had got used to London and London ways," he said, "and he would rather go on to the end, which was

not very far off now, picking money up after his own fashion. The girl would be all the richer for it some

dav."

The only concession he would make was at Patty's request that he would live in more comfortable quarters even if he retained his old office in the court off the Strand. So it was arranged he should have a couple of rooms at Mrs. Dobbs', who promised to look after his creature comforts, which she did most willingly now she

had ascertained that he was able to pay for it.

And all details being finally settled, Mr. and Mrs. Max Schippheim started for Arundale, Patty in some trepidation of mind as to the reception she would meet with from Lady Muriel, and the life she would be led by the junior partner's wife when she took up her seniority of position by Max's side. Not one word of her fears and anxieties on this subject did she, however, dare express to her husband.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHECKMATED.

GREAT were the rejoicings in Arundale when it became known that Max Schippheim and his bride were coming home.

The majority of the people were tired of the reign of chaos, and longed for the old days of order and regular payments to return. There was scarcely a man in Arundale but would have ducked Paul Brumeau with the greatest pleasure if he had only received a sign from the master that such a proceeding would be acceptable, nor is it altogether doubtful whether their allegiance to Max Schippheim would not have caused them to include Herbert Alston himself in the ducking had they known how much he was involved in the late suspicious abduction.

As matters were, however, they could only give vent to their feelings in triumphal arches, much shouting, drinking, and general conviviality. They had intended to drag the newly married pair in an open carriage from the station through the town, but they were balked of this scheme by the pair arriving in the dark on the day previous to the one on which they were expected, and walking

quietly from the railway to Max Schippheim's quarters in the works. Max Schippheim had evidently no intention of encouraging any fuss or display, for he went in among the men on the morrow with a nod and a good day, just as if he had seen them but a week before, and there had been no unusual circumstances attending his prolonged absence.

He had a private conversation with Andrews, which lasted over an hour, and resulted in the dismissal of several troublesome "hands," and the packing up and sending off of all Paul Brumeau's tools and effects. Captain Christian Meyer was going to send down another designer in chief from one of the Art Schools in London. So Andrews told one or two of the superior workmen, an announcement which evoked a cheery acknowledgment of Christian, who was a considerable favorite in Arundale.

Thus passed at least twenty-four hours, and still the two partners had not met, nor any sign of welcome home

been given by Lady Muriel.

Report said she was ill, that her nerves had been overstrained by all the mental worry she had undergone during Max Schippheim's absence; when, however, he was told this by Patty, who had heard all the Arundale news from Elsie Bligh, he half shut his eyes and nodded his head and chuckled, while he repeated the one word "checkmated" more than once. The present aspect of affairs seemed to amuse Mr. Schippheim vastly; it was just that working out of a difficult bit of play in the great game of life which gave his astute mind subject for observation. It was his turn to have the best of it, he fancied, but he wondered none the less what move Lady Muriel would try for, now that she had scarcely a piece to command.

"Alston is an arrant coward; he is keeping out of the way, but I never thought her ladyship was a coward before. I quite expected her to have overwhelmed us with

fuss and blarney.

As it happened, however, at the end of two days the partners met accidentally in the quadrangle and shook hands. Herbert Alston got very red, and shuffled from one foot to the other, but Max Schippheim was imperturbably cool.

"Got back, you see, at last. It was an inconvenient slip that ship going off so suddenly; can't think how I managed to miss you. However, a sea voyage is always considered beneficial. How is Lady Muriel?"

"Very unwell, very unwell, I am sorry to say."

"Dear, dear, I am sorry. When she is better tell her I hope she will come and patronize my little wife; she is rather shy, poor child."

And Max Schippheim passed on, the same stealthy smile creeping about his face, which had more than once lurked

there of late.

Could he have heard Lady Muriel's indignant outburst when his message was given her by her husband, it would

probably have ripened into a laugh.

"Call on her, call on that horrid little drab that I have done every thing I can to keep out of Arundale? Never! No, Herbert, I will be brought into no collision with Max Schippheim's wife, and in order to avoid all possibility of it, I intend to leave Arundale."

"Leave Arundale, leave Dale House! why where do you

intend to go?"

"To London, where my artistic tastes, and my knowledge of organization and the reforms necessary to place large undertakings in good working order will be thoroughly appreciated."

Herbert Alston gave a prolonged whistle, but whether he was sorry for his wife's failures or the London undertakings, he did not venture to say. He only asked—

"And what is to be done with Dale House? What am

I to do?"

"You must let Dale House, and take a room somewhere in the town where you can come occasionally to transact business."

Mr. Alston looked at her in utter astonishment; he could not conceive why she should take recent occurrences so much to heart, especially since Max Schippheim did not seem inclined to blame them for what had happened; but of course, being her husband, Herbert Alston knew nothing of the true reason why she had taken such a dislike to Arundale and its neighborhood. He was perhaps the only individual for miles round who had not the slightest inkling of her secret love for Christian Meyer. She had not even yet told him that that morning she had

received a letter from Bertha informing her of her engagement to Christian, and telling her of Max Schippheim's generosity about money. This was the severest stab Lady Muriel had received for many a day, and the wound was still too fresh for her to probe it by giving her husband the chance of discussing the topic from all its bearings. That he must do so sooner or later she knew full well. Meantime she felt that befall what might she must leave that place and return to it no more, at all events not till a new epoch had arisen in her affairs.

Like a runaway culprit, then, she prepared to fly, not because she feared contamination by the tussle for place with Mr. Schippheim's low-born bride, as most people would suspect, but because she had not sufficient strength to endure the sight of that great happiness which she knew would be paraded before her eyes whenever Christian and Bertha came, as they frequently would, to Arun-

dale.

"She was ill," she said, "very ill, must start at once for Cannes, or the Riviera, or somewhere in the South, and when she came back she would settle in London and return to Arundale no more. If Herbert objected she had money of her own and would make her own arrangements."

He did not attempt to stop her, but when she was on the point of starting and he had just heard from Mr. Schippheim of Bertha's engagement, he asked her with a sort of sneer whether the marriage should take place from her new house in town.

Did even Herbert Alston begin to have suspicions?

"Certainly not!" she answered. "The Tramberleys have arranged this affair, let them have the trouble and inconvenience of the wedding. I have never been consulted."

And so it was, one sunny day in the early spring, while Lady Muriel, who had departed without ever seeing Max Schippheim, was basking in the gorgeous sunshine of the fair South, Bertha was married to Christian Meyer in the parish church at Richmond. It was a double wedding, for at the same time and place Angey Tramberley became the wife of that finest of London bachelors, the Hon. Felix Elton. The latter couple started for the South, and on more than one occasion met Lady Muriel, who

since she had nothing else to engage her thoughts, had become devoted to Eric, who was her almost constant

companion.

Bertha and Christian took a shorter ramble. He had not got off that foreign service exchange and they consequently preferred to remain as long as possible in their own country, for both of them had a sort of dread of that exile to India which Christian had sought so ardently only a few months before.

When Max Schippheim heard of it he at once declared that he would not permit Christian to leave the country. He wanted him at the works he said, to take his place when he grew older. He had better leave the service altogether, and take Dale House from the Alstons, giving

M1. Alston a couple of rooms in it.

So it was all settled, and that Herbert Alston occupied his rooms at Dale House much more frequently than he did his wife's London House, the chronicles of Arundale

are not backward in relating.

Nor did he prove nearly so difficult to deal with in business matters since his wife's influence was removed; or perhaps it was because the recollection of what had happened in the past was never wholly obliterated from his mind, and rendered him just a little subservient to the

decrees of the senior partner and his nephew.

As for Bertha and Patty, they remained firm friends, the roughness of manner and tone that Mrs. Schippheim's early surroundings had imparted to her being considerably decreased by association with Bertha's more gentle and refined nature. Only one thought troubled Patty during the early days of her married life. What had become of Joe?"

He was still working at Belton, people said, but if this were so, it was not in a very steady manner, Patty feared, since reports reached her that Joe had taken to drinking and evil courses. It was a great misery to honest, right-minded Patty to think of this, and after brooding over it in private for a long while she decided to consult her friend Bertha as to whether or not they could do anything to mend matters.

Bertha at once recommended that Max Schippheim should be told without delay; a step to which Patty at first objected, for she thought of Joe as her old lover, and re-

membered the troubles his defense of her had brought about. She was overruled, however, and a happy thing it was that she consented to follow Bertha's counsel, since Mr. Schippheim at once sent for Joe, whom he had quite forgotten in his own happiness, and offered to reinstate him in his old employment, if he would promise to take the pledge, and give up frequenting loose places of entertainment.

Joe, who would have promised anything to get back to Arundale, at once consented, ay! and he kept his word too. Joe was made of the right sort of stuff, though the rough handling he had received had somewhat frayed the

fabric here and there.

Someone in Arundale, however, was found to darn over the worn places, so neatly too that they became scarcely perceptible. That someone was not Patty. Joe had quite enough good sense to regard his love for her as an almost forgotten dream, though they always had a few cordial

words for each other when they met.

No, it was pretty little Elsie Bligh who took the smoothing of Joe's life into her charge, and acquitted herself of her self-imposed task so effectually that when they were married and had a cottage of their own they were pronounced the happiest couple in Arundale, and Elsie was never tired of showing the neighbors who called on her the many beautiful, precious household treasures which had been the gift of Max Schippheim and his true-hearted wife.

THE END.

CH	IARLOTTE, EMILY, AND ANNE BRONTE'S WORKS	0
3	Jane Eyre (in small type)	16
396	Jane Eyre (in bold, handsome type)	20
162	Shirley	20
311	The Professor	10
329	Wuthering Heights	20
	Villette The Tenant of Wildfell Hall	20
	Agnes Grey	20
1000	Agues Orey	100
	MISS M. E. BRADDON'S WORKS.	
26	The contract of the contract o	20
69	To the Bitter End	20
89	The Lovels of Arden	50
95	Dead Men's Shoes	20
	Eleanor's Victory	20
114	Dairell Markham.	10
171	The Lady Lisle	10 20
190	Hostages to Fortune	20
The state of the s	Birds of Prey	20
235	An Open Verdict	20
251	Lady Audley's Secret	20
254		10
260	Charlotte's Inheritance	20
	Leighton Grange	10
	Lost for Love	20
	Dead-Sea Fruit	20
459	The Doctor's Wife	20
469	Rupert GodwinVixen	20
_ ~~~	The Cloven Foot	20
500	Joshua Haggard's Daughter	20
519	Weavers and Weft	10
525	Sir Jasper's Tenant	20
539	A Strange World	20
550	Fenton's Quest	20
	John Marchmont's Legacy	20
572	The Lady's Mile	20
579		20
581 619	Only a Woman (Edited by Miss M. E. Braddon)	20
641	Taken at the FloodOnly a Clod	20
649	Publicans and Sinners	20
656	George Caulfield's Journey	10
665	The Shadow in the Corner	10
666	Bound to John Company: or. Robert Ainsleigh	20
701	Barbara; or, Splendid Misery	20
705	Put to the Test (Edited by Miss M. E. Braddon)	20
734	Diavola; or, Nobody's Daughter. Part I	20
734	Diavola; or, Nobody's Daughter. Part II	26

	MISS M. E. BRADDON'S WORKS.—Continued.	
811	Dudley Carleon	. 10
828	The Fatal Marriage	10
337	Just as I Am; or, A Living Lie	20
942	Asphodel	20
1265	The Misletoe Bough	. 20
	Mount Royal Flower and Weed	20
1553	The Golden Calf	20
1638	Married in Haste (Edited by Miss M. E. Braddon)	20
	RHODA BROUGHTON'S WORKS.	
186	"Good-Bye, Sweetheart"	10
269	Red as a Rose is She	20
285	Cometh Up as a Flower	10
402	"Not Wisely, But Too Well"	20
458		20
762	Joan Second Thoughts	20
.02		20
	WILKIE COLLINS' WORKS.	
	The Woman in White	
	The Dead Secret	
22		20
38	The Queen of Hearts	20 20
42		
76		10
94	The Law and The Lady	20
180	Armadale	20
191		10
250	The Two Destinies	10 20
286	After Dark	
409		
433		10
487		10
551	The Yellow Mask	10
	Fallen Leaves	20
	Poor Miss Finch The Moonstone	20 20
	Jezebel's Daughter	
713	The Captain's Last Love	10
721	Basil	20
745		
	Duel in Herne Wood	
AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PERSON	Who Killed Zebedee?	
971	The Frozen Deep The Black Robe	
	Your Money of Your Life	
	Herrt and Science. A Story of the Present Time	

J. FENIMORE COOPER'S WORKS.				
222	Last of the Mohicans	20		
	The Deerslayer	20		
	The Pathfinder	20		
	The Pioneers	20		
231		20		
THE PERSON NAMED IN	The Prairie	20		
233	The Pilot	20		
CHANGE TO COLUMN	The Water-Witch			
	The Two Admirals	20		
615		20		
	Wing and-Wing	20		
940	The Spy	20		
1066	The Wyandotté	20		
	Afloat and Ashore	20		
1262	Miles Wallingford (Sequel to "Afloat and Ashore")	20		
1569	The Headsman; or, The Abbaye des Vignerons	20		
1605	The Monikins	20		
1661	The Monikins The Heidenmauer; or, The Benedictines. A Legend of			
	the Rhine	20		
1691	The Crater; or, Vulcan's Peak. A Tale of the Pacific	20		
	CHARLES DICKENS' WORKS.			
20		20		
100		20		
100	Hard Times	10		
118	Great Expectations	20		
197	David Copperfield	20		
200	Nieholog Nieklehr	20		
912	Nicholas Nickleby			
919	Barnaby Rudge	20		
920	Dombey and Son	20		
017	Mortin Charge wit	10		
	Martin Chuzzlewit	20		
		20		
289	A Christmas Carol	10		
291	The Haunted Man	10		
	Little Dorrit			
308		10		
	The Battle of Life			
325		20		
337	Bleak House	20		
352	Pickwick Papers	20		
359	Somebody's Luggage	10		
367	Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings	10		
372	Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices	10		
375	Mugby Junction	10		
403	Tom Tiddler's Ground	10		
498	The Uncommercial Traveler	20		
521	Master Humphrey's Clock	10		
625	Sketches by Boz	20		
639	Sketches of Young Couples	10		
827	The Mudfog Papers, &c	10		

	CHARLES DICKENS' WORKS Continued.	
860	The Mystery of Edwin Drood	20
900	Pictures From Italy	10
1411	A Child's History of England	20
1464	The Picnic Papers	20
1558	Three Detective Anecdotes, and Other Sketches	10
1682	The Plays and Poems of Charles Dickens, with a few Miscel-	-
	lanies in Prose, now First Collected. Edited, Prefaced,	
	and Annotated by Richard Herne Shepherd. First half.	20
1682	The Plays and Poems of Charles Dickens, with a few Mis-	
	cellanies in Prose, now First Collected. Edited, Pref-	
	aced, and Annotated by Richard Herne ShepherdSec-	
THE PARTY OF	ond half	20
	WODER DV WITE ATMITOD OF " DODA WHODNE"	
	WORKS BY THE AUTHOR OF "DORA THORNE."	
	More Bitter than Death	10
	Madolin's Lover	20
	A Golden Dawn	10
078	A Dead Heart	10
718	Lord Lynne's Choice; or, True Love Never Runs Smooth.	10
	Which Loved Him Best	20
021	Dora Thorne At War with Herself	26
021	The Sin of a Lifetime	20
1013	Lady Gwendoline's Dream	10
1018	Wife in Name Only	20
1044	Like No Other Love	10
	A Woman's War	10
	Hilary's Folly	10
1074	A Queen Amongst Women	10
1077	A Gilded Sin	10
1081	A Bridge of Love	10
	The Fatal Lilies	10
	Wedded and Parted	10
	A Bride From the Sea	
	A Rose in Thorns	
	The Shadow of a Sin	
1106	Redeemed by Love	10
	Love's Warfare	
1120	Repented at Leisure	20
	From Gloom to Sunlight	
	Hilda	
	A Golden Heart	
	Ingledew House	
1288	A Broken Wedding-Ring	20
1305	Love For a Day; or, Under the Lilacs	10
1357	The Wife's Secret	10
1393	Two Kisses	10
1460	Between Two Sins	10
	The Cost of Her Love	
1664	Romance of a Black Veil	20

"THE DUCHESS" WORKS.			
258	Phyllis (small type)	10	
589	Phyllis (large type)	20	
393	Molly Bawn	20	
445	The Baby	10	
	"Airy Fairy Lilian"	20	
	Beauty's Daughters	20	
	How Snooks Got Out of It	10	
1010	Mrs. Geoffrey	20	
1109	Faith and Unfaith	20	
	Monica, and A Rose Distill'd	10	
	Loys, Lord Berresford, and Other Tales	20	
7000	Loys, Hora Berrestora, and Other Tales	20	
	ALEXANDER DUMAS' WORKS.		
111	The Twin Lieutenants	10	
		10	
155		40	
		10	
167	The Queen's Necklace	20	
172	The Chevalier de Maison Rouge	20	
184	The Countess de Charny	20	
188		10	
193		20	
194		10	
		10	
201		10	
007	Beau Tancrede; or, The Marriage Verdict (large type)	20	
228	The Regent's Daughter	10	
		20	
	The Forty-five Guardsmen		
276	The Page of the Duke of Savoy	10	
	Six Years Later; or, Taking the Bastile		
283		20	
298		10	
306	Three Strong Men	10	
318	Adventures of a Marquis. First half	10	
331	Adventures of a Marquis. Second half	20	
SECTION OF SECTION		20	
	The Mohicans of Paris. Vol. I. (large type)	20	
1565	The Mohicans of Paris. Vol. II. (large type)	20	
1565	The Mohicans of Paris. Vol. III. (large type)	20	
1565	The Mohicans of Paris. Vol. IV. (large type)	20	
344	Ascanio	10	
	The Watchmaker	20	
616	The Two Dianas	20	
622	Andrée de Taverney	20	
064	Vicomte de Bragelonne (1st Series)	20	
604	Vicomte de Bragelonne (2d Series)	20	

		663804
	ALEXANDER DUMAS' WORKS.—Continued.	
664	Vicomte de Bragelonne (3d Series)	20
688	Vicomte de Bragelonne (4th Series)	20
849	Doctor Basilius Salvator: Being the continuation and conclusion of "The	20
1452	Salvator: Being the continuation and conclusion of "The Mohicans of Paris." Vol. I	20
1452	Salvator: Being the continuation and conclusion of "The	20
	Mohicans of Paris." Vol. II	20
1402	Salvator: Being the continuation and conclusion of "The Mohicans of Paris." Vol. III	20
1452	Salvator: Being the continuation and conclusion of "The	00
1452	Mohicans of Paris." Vol. IV	20
	Mohicans of Paris." Vol. V	20
1592	The Corsican Brothers Marguerite de Valois. An Historical Romance	10 20
	GEORGE EBERS' WORKS.	
712	Uarda: A Romance of Ancient Egypt	20
756 812	Homo Sum	10
880	The Sisters	20
1120		20
1594		20
	是一种,我们就是一个时间,不是一个人的。 第一个人的时间,我们就是一个人的时间,我们就是一个人的时间,我们就是一个人的时间,我们就是一个人的时间,我们就是一个人的时间,他们就是一个人的时间,我们就是一个	
	GEORGE ELIOT'S WORKS.	
7	Adam Bede	20
941	The Mill on the Floss (small type)	20
15	Romola	20
	Felix Holt, the Radical	
70	Middlemarch	20
The second second	Daniel Derouda	20
		10
	Brother Jacob	
	Janet's Repentance Impressions of Theophrastus Such	
		20
	MRS. FORRESTER'S WORKS.	
-	Fair Women	
431	Diana CarewViva	
	Rhona	

	MRS. FORRESTER'S WORKS.—Continued.	
538	A Young Man's Fancy	10
556	Mignon	20
573	Mignon The Turn of Fortune's Wheel	10
600	Dolores	20
620	In a Country House	10
858	Roy and Viola	26
894	My Hero	20
1163	My Lord and My Lady	20
	I Have Lived and Loved	
1588	From Olympus to Hades	20
	EMILE GABORIAU'S WORKS.	
408	File No. 113	20
465	Monsieur Lecoq. First half	20
465	Monsieur Lecoq. Second half	20
476	The Slaves of Paris. First half Second half	20 20
490	Marriage at a Venture	10
494	The Mystery of Orcival	
501	Other People's Money	20
509	Within an Inch of His Life	20
	The Widow Lerouge The Clique of Gold	20 20
671	The Count's Secret. Part I	20
671	The Count's Secret. Part II	20
704	Captain Contanceau; or, The Volunteers of 1792	10
741	The Downward Path; or, A House Built on Sand (La	00
7/11	Degringolade). Part I	20
141	Degringolade). Part II	20
758	The Little Old Man of the Batignolles	
778	The Men of the Bureau	10
789	Promises of Marriage	10
834	The 13th Hussars A Thousand Francs Reward	10
	Max's Marriage; or, The Vicomte's Choice	10
	The Marquise de Brinvilliers	
	MARY CECIL HAY'S WORKS.	
8	The Arundel Motto	10
407	The Arundel Motto (in large type)	20
197	Old Myddelton's Money (in large type)	10
17	Hidden Perils	10
434	Hidden Perils (in large type)	20
23	The Squire's Legacy	10
516	The Squire's Legacy (in large type)	20

The Seaside Library.—Pocket Edition.

-89	(CONTINUED FROM SEC	OND PAGE OF COVER.)
	parce 1	NO. PRICE.
NO		132 Master Humphrey's Clock. By Charles
LIE	B Mrs. Carr's Companion. By M. Wight-	Dickens 10
Ш		199 Poton the Wholer By Wm. H. G.
11	Some of our Girls. By Mrs. Eiloart 20	Kingston
11:	Diamond Cut Diamond. By T. Adol-	124 The Witching Hour "The Duchess" 10
189	phus Trollope	135 A Great Heiress. By R. E. Francillon 10
11	6 Moths. By "Ouida"	136 "That Last Rehearsal." By "The
11	7 A Tale of the Shore and Ocean. By	Duchess "
10	W. H. G. Kingston 20	137 Uncle Jack. By Walter Besant 10
11	8 Loys, Lord Berresford, and Eric Der-	199 Green Destroy and Piccedilly By
100	ing. By "The Duchess" 10	138 Green Pastures and Piccadilly. By William Black
11	9 Monica, and A Rose Distill'd. By	William Diack Wilk.
**	"The Duchess"	139 The Romantic Adventures of a Milk
10	o Tom Brown's Schooldays at Rugby.	main. Dy inomas maid,
1%	By Thos. Hughes 20	140 A Glorious Fortune. Walter Besant 10
		141 She Loved Him. By Annie Thomas. 10
12	Maid of Athens. By Justin McCarthy 20	142 Jenifer. By Annie Thomas 20
12	2 Ione Stewart. By Mrs. E. Lynn Linton 20	143 One False, Both Fair. By John B. Harwood
12	3 Sweet is True Love. "The Duchess". 10	Harwood Dr. Cabonian 10
12	4 Three Feathers. By William Black. 20	144 Promises of Marriage. By Gaboriau 10
12	5 The Monarch of Mincing Lane. By	145 God and the Man. By Robert Buch-
	William Black 20	anan
15	26 Kilmeny. By William Black 20	146 Love Finds the Way. By Walter Be-
188	or Adrian Bright. By Mrs. Caddy 20	Saul and James Luce
15	28 Afternoon, and Other Sketches. By	147 Rachel Ray. By Anthony Trollope. 20
80	"Ouida" 10	148 Thorns and Orange-Blossoms. Dy
40	29 Rossmoyne. By "The Duchess" 10	the Author of "Dora Thorne" 20
70	30 The Last of the Barons. By Sir E.	
	Rulwer Lytton	Puccian of Pushkin
11	31 Our Mutual Friend. By Charles Dick-	150 For Himself Alone. By T. W. Speight 10
L	ens	
	CHS	

The above books are for sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address, postage prepaid, by the publisher, on receipt of 12 cents for single numbers, and 25 cents for double numbers. Parties wishing the *Pocket Edition* of The Seaside Library must be careful to mention the Pocket Edition, otherwise the Ordinary Edition will be sent. Address,

GEORGE MUNRO, Publisher,

P. O. Box 3751.

17 to 27 Vandewater Street, New York.

PROSPECTUS FOR 1884.

THE FIRESIDE COMPANION is the best paper of the kind published. Its popularity is entirely owing to good stories. Stories of detective life and service have always been one of its great features.

OLD SLEUTH'S" STORIES

Are Universally Admitted to be THE BEST DETECTIVE STORIES.

The best native talent is employed in every department. Among its female writers are

Mrs. Lucy Randall Comfort, Mrs. Charlotte M. Stanley, Mrs. Alex. McVeigh Miller, Mrs. Sumner Hayden, Christine Carlton, Rose Ashleigh, the Author of "Dora Thorne," Mary Cecil Hay, etc., etc.

The most delightful love stories are to be found in its pages. The highest standard is maintained. Only the most interesting contributions are published. The Fireside Companion Contains the Richest Variety of Sketches and Literary Miscellany.

TERMS FOR 1884: THE NEW YORK FIRESIDE COMPANION will be sent for one year, on receipt of \$3; two copies for \$5; or nine copies for \$20. Getters-up of Clubs can afterward add single copies at \$2.50 each. We will be responsible for remittances sent in Registered Letters, or by Post-office Money Orders. Postage free. Specimen copies sent free. GEORGE MUNRO, Publisher, 17 to 27 Vandewater St., N. Y. (P. O. Box 3751.)

THE SEASIDE LIBRARY.—Pocket Edition.

		Latest Assues.	
	NO.	PRI	CE.
	151		10
	150	For Himself Alone. By T. W. Speight	10
]	149	The Captain's Daughter. From the Russian of Pushkin	10
	148	Thorns and Orange-Blossoms. By Author of "Dora Thorne"	20
1	147	Rachel Ray. By Anthony Trollope	20
1	146	Rachel Ray. By Anthony Trollope Love Finds the Way, and Other Stories. By Besant and Rice	10
	145	God and the Man. By ROBERT BUCHANAN	20
	144	Promises of Marriage. By EMILE GABORIAU	10
	143	One False, Both Fair. By John B. Harwood	20
	142	Jenifer. By Annie Thomas (Mrs. Pender Cudlip)	20
1	141	She Loved Him. By Annie Thomas (Mrs. Pender Cudlip)	
1	140		10
1	139	The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid. By Thos. HARDY.	10
		Green Pastures and Piccadilly. By WILLIAM BLACK	
1	137	Uncle Jack. By WALTER BESANT	10
1	136	"That Last Rehearsal." By "THE DUCHESS"	10
1	135	A Great Heiress. By R. E. Francillon	10
	129	Rossmoyne. By "The Duchess"	10
1	127	Adrian Bright. By Mrs. Caddy	20
]	122	Ione Stewart. By Mrs. E. Lynn Linton	20
]	121	Maid of Athens. By Justin McCarthy	20
]	115	Diamond Cut Diamond. By T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE	10
1	113	Mrs. Carr's Companion. By M. Wightwick	10
]	112	The Waters of Marah. By John Hill	20
]	110	Under The Red Flag. By Miss M. E. Braddon	10
1	109	Little Loo. By W. ČLARK RUSSELL	20
]	105	A Noble Wife. By John Saunders	20
	104	The Coral Pin. By F. Du Boisgobey	30
			20
	54	A Broken Wedding-Ring. BY THE AUTHOR OF "DORA THORNE"	20
	51	Dora Thorne. By the Author of "Her Mother's Sin"	20
		Thicker Than Water. By James Payn	
		Altiora Peto. By Laurence Oliphant	
	1	Yolande. By William Black	20
			ALC: UNKNOWN

The above books are for sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address, postage prepaid, by the publisher, on receipt of 12 cents for single numbers, and 25 cents for double numbers. Parties wishing the Pocket Edition of The Seaside Library must be careful to mention the Pocket Edition, otherwise the Ordinary Edition will be sent. Address. P.O. Box 3751. GEORGE MUNRO, Publisher, 17 to 27 Vandewater St., N. Y.

The New York Monthly Fashion Bazar.

Every number contains new attractions. The Illustrated Fashions are obtained from the best sources. It contains on the cover of each number a new COLORED PLATE OF CHILDREN'S FASHIONS, and contains, also, a COLORED SUPPLEMENT OF LADIES' FASHIONS. Among the contributors are Mary Cecil Hay, "The Duchess," Author of "Molly Bawn," The Author of "Dora Thorne," Mattie E. Randall, Margaret Lee, and other Popular Authors.

We employ no traveling agents to solicit subscriptions for The New York Monthly Fashion Bazar. All persons representing themselves as such are swindlers.

THE NEW YORK MONTHLY FASHION BAZAR is for sale by all newsdealers. It will also be sent, postage prepaid, for 25 cents per single copy. The subscription price is \$2.50 per year. Address GEORGE MUNRO, 17 to 27 Vandewater St., N. Y. P.O. Box 3751.

